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# Constructing a Reflective Site: Practice between art and pedagogy in the art school

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Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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I confirm that this is my own work and that all published or other sources of material consulted have been acknowledged in notes to the text or in the bibliography.

I confirm that this work has not been submitted for a comparable academic award.

## **Abstract**

Constructing a Reflective Site is a fine art practice-based research project, which considers the relationship between art practice and teaching. It does this through a critical examination of reflection in art, in pedagogy and in philosophy.

Contemporary art forms, like relational practice, discursive practice and artists appropriating education as their medium, raise new questions regarding the mechanisms by which practice informs or can inform teaching within Higher Education. Reflection can be one way to elucidate and question this interrelationship towards an understanding of how notions of knowledge can be seen to operate across practice and teaching.

This research is undertaken from within a dual position on practice: art practice and teaching as practice. The concept of practice-based research has been adopted from emerging positions in relation to artistic practice and artistic research, and this position has also been employed in the study of teaching as practice. This is thus a dual study, which has employed an interdisciplinary approach towards an examination of subject specificity in fine art teaching. Notions of site have been used both as an artistic position in relation to the research, and as a theoretical framework, drawing on Miwon Kwon's genealogy of site-specific practice.

The research sought to explore the relationship between reflection in teaching and learning and reflection within an artistic practice and has found that, in epistemological, cognitive, social and historical terms, reflection does not necessarily constitute the same experience across pedagogy and art practice. This has consequences both for art students when asked to critically reflect on their work and also for developing the field of artistic research and concepts of artistic knowledge. Furthermore, these differences highlight the need to continually examine contemporary arts practices for models contributing to subject specific pedagogies in fine art, in order to keep the relationship between the subject and the academy critical and productive.





## Prologue

A prologue introduces a text. ‘Prologue’ can also mean an introductory act or event, hence this prologue serves as a framing event, and as a critical reflection on the overall event of the research process and thesis, including its conclusions.<sup>1</sup> It ‘serve[s] to contextualise and further articulate the complexities raised within the body of the thesis’ and addresses some of the problems of representing the hybrid and interstitial nature of this research.<sup>2</sup> This prologue will, therefore, attempt to highlight the problems of communicating and disseminating an *indisciplinary* research project whilst introducing the problems and contradictions of rendering a territory/territories. It was written after (the event) of the PhD viva examination, and here constitutes a ‘minor correction’ to the thesis.<sup>3</sup>

The thesis, *Constructing a Reflective Site*, describes a fine art, practice-based doctoral research project which is a critical examination of different forms of reflection in art and pedagogy through a consideration of the relationship between art practice and art teaching. Structurally, notions of *site* constitute an artistic position in relation to the research, as well as a theoretical and practical framework, drawing on Miwon Kwon’s genealogy of site-specific practice.<sup>4</sup> Thus, this research was a multi-sited study, which employed an interdisciplinary approach towards an examination of subject specificity and the critical potential of explicitly bringing artistic practice into art teaching.<sup>5</sup> As practice-based research, the methodology I employed drew on emerging positions in relation to artistic practice and artistic research, and was also deployed towards researching teaching as a



1 *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Sixth Edition, 2007.

2 This is a quote from the examiners report.

3 At University of the Arts, London, after the doctoral examination, a pass is either awarded unconditionally or, more commonly, subject to minor corrections.

4 Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site specific Art and Locational Identity*, MIT Press, 2004.

5 *Indisciplinary* is a term coined by Jaques Ranciere, see pp.110-111 for an explication of its use in this research.

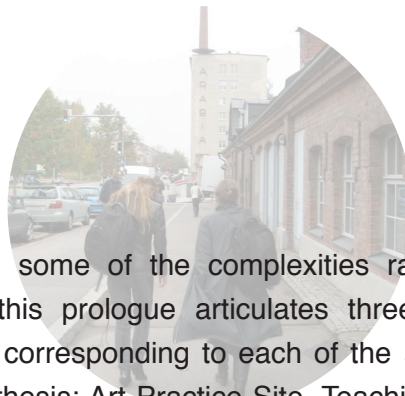
practice.

To articulate some of the complexities raised within the thesis, this prologue articulates three questions or problems corresponding to each of the *sites* set up through the thesis: Art Practice Site, Teaching Site and Reflexive Praxis Site. However, these questions and their related issues are not neatly contained. They run through the entirety of the thesis, are mirrored in the research project itself, and can be seen in art and pedagogic research more generally. The issues framed by these questions can here be critically acknowledged and thus signal possibilities for further work on my part and by others interested in these evolving fields. The questions are:

1. *Where is the practice?*
2. *What does the art school offer as a site of pedagogic research?*
3. *What is the problem with art practices as models?*

This prologue also tries to acknowledge some of the mess, the daftness, the naivety, and the critical evasions in the research, and begins to speculate on how these aspects could have analytically asserted themselves (more or differently) within the research submission, in or beyond the thesis as a text.

*Where is the practice?* There is extensive discussion throughout the thesis about the problems of undertaking research that bridges the practice of artistic production and the practice of teaching. Ironically perhaps, the question we end up with is, where is the practice within the research? How can others reading this thesis, productively engage with the multifarious practices emerging and emergent in the field of art and art pedagogic research? The solution presented in this thesis is a deliberate compromise. I could not find a way to satisfactory include a compelling sense of my work, either as an artist or as a teacher. My art practice is largely material and often involves large, site-specific



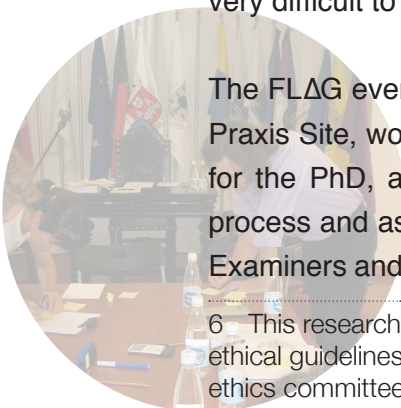
installations. Teaching, on the other hand, is highly dialogic and mostly immaterial in form, and it always involves other subjects. In terms of their ‘manifestation’ they could hardly be more different. Below, I will discuss alternative approaches and speculate on the implications. The presentation found in this thesis is linked to the position of the thesis as a submission in part fulfilment of a PhD. At the examination point the thesis assumes a privileged position in relation to the totality of the submission. However, the examination afforded to the practice is on a different level. Potentially it can fail or warrant corrections, but this does not compare to the scrutiny that the thesis is under. I aimed for the practice to ‘sit inside’ the thesis and thus be subject to an interconnected evaluation process, an attempt which subsumed the practice component in some senses.



If the problem of how to integrate the art practice was a challenge, finding a way to integrate the practice of teaching, to make it ‘visible’ within the submission without transgressing the University of the Arts (or my own) ethical guidelines, seemed near impossible. Particularly as I also wanted to acknowledge the students’ roles as co-researchers.<sup>6</sup> There are very clear guidelines about participation within UAL research. Research students who want or need to involve anyone else in their research need their proposal to be presented to the University ethics committee before their project can be accepted. Some of the guidelines make aspects of pedagogic research (as well as participatory, collaborative art practices etc.) very difficult to pass through the committee.

The FLΔG event, forming the third site of the thesis, the Praxis Site, would ideally have been a submission point for the PhD, as I view it as both part of the research process and as an identifiable outcome of the research. Examiners and the Chair could have been invited to take

6 This research was only allowed if it adhered to the strict ethical guidelines, and it was subject to approval by the UAL ethics committee. See <http://www.arts.ac.uk/media/research/documents/EthicsApprovalGuidance1213.pdf>, (accessed 22.02.13).

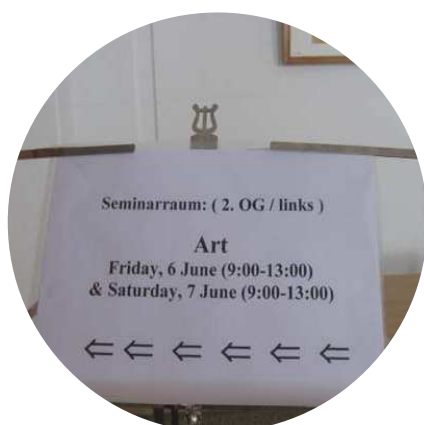


part in the event as participants or observers. Here, both the process and outcome of layered and interconnected art and teaching practice would have manifested. This was not possible since the examiners had not yet been agreed, approached or appointed.

An exhibition at the point of submission, consisting of various forms of material documentation would in some ways privilege one part of the practices under scrutiny when another, the teaching element would not be nearly so visible. What could have been the alternative in terms of teaching manifesting as practice? Could the submission have included some kind of performance, perhaps a 'play' with actors, re-enacted as a theatrical event? Even with the current rules and regulations around the PhD submission there is scope for a more determined practice presentation than the one set up in this thesis.

I tried to reduce aspects of my practice into something that could 'fit' inside the format of the written thesis. For instance, I tried to see if making an artwork could be captured as a conversation.<sup>7</sup> The practice thus captured is in some ways, an uncomfortable form of the real thing, and this more adventurous passage around the making of a work (written up as a dialogue) sits uneasily within the rest of the writing. Its almost surreal or absurdist form is not engaged with in a critical sense.<sup>8</sup> The question of what it means to write this way is not elaborated in the thesis, but if we think of Ranciere's *The Politics of Aesthetics*, perhaps this odd form of writing can in a small way allow for a shift in the 'distribution of the sensible', which determines what we are able to engage with, and how this engagement takes place.<sup>9</sup>

In the next section of the thesis years of work with



<sup>7</sup> See pp. 35-45 of the thesis.

<sup>8</sup> For the painting symposium *Paintings Sites and Processes*, 30.11.12, I enacted this dialogue with a collaborator, whereby the more absurd aspect became fore-grounded.

<sup>9</sup> Jacques Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, London: Continuum, 2004.

*Future Reflections Research Group* is condensed into a 'case study', thus shoehorning a multiplicity of events, outcomes, and collaborative experiments into a short section that could serve to elucidate and demonstrate a complex form or model of reflection within the narrative of the thesis.<sup>10</sup> I am still unsure about either strategy for explicating practice but I think that despite the potential embarrassment of 'the dialogue' (even if considered as 'bad' writing or as 'bad' art), this still has more potential than the second 'case study' on Future Reflections. The dialogue, notwithstanding its inherent silliness, opens up some kind of alternative space which allows the practice within the making of a work to be illuminated, if not directly then through a 'sideway light'.<sup>11</sup>



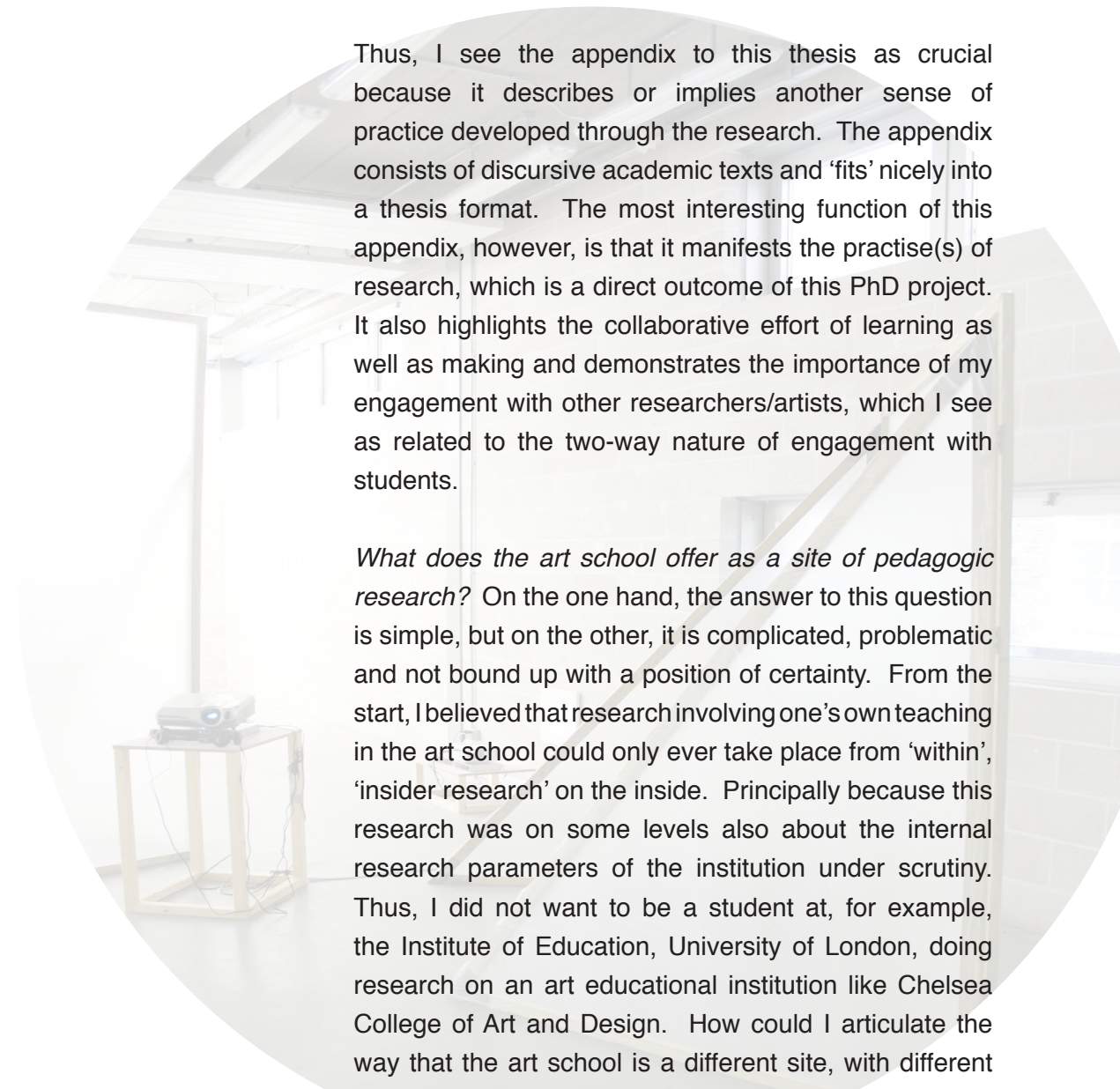
Given the way that my practice can be seen as not assertive enough within the thesis it is interesting to look at some other aspects of the work of Future Reflections Research Group. FRRG was perhaps more than anything else concerned with the problem of the practice or what we call the totality of practice, the 'work', in the doctoral research process. We asked, where is the work, what is the work, where is the knowledge in the work? We wanted to undo hierarchies between forms of text, image, events and actions. We were interested in the site of art research and the site of the PhD. Our experience, gained through performative presentations and dispersed art/research works, was that we had a problem with reception. Audiences and readers found our work confusing as it did not fit with conventional expectations of research, nor was it clearly art. Instead this work discussed precisely the tension between the two in the art doctoral research context. Two of our papers are included in the appendix of the thesis and all can be found online.<sup>12</sup>

10 See Future Reflections website, <http://www.futurereflections.org.uk>, (accessed 11.02.13).

11 Aslaug Nytnes, 'Lighting from the Side: Rhetoric and Artistic Research', *Sensuous Knowledge: Focus on Artistic Research and Development*, Bergen: National Academy of the Arts, 2006.

12 See pp. 47-51 of thesis and Future Reflections website



A circular inset image showing a modern interior space. In the foreground, there is a light-colored wooden table with a projector on it. In the background, a staircase with a wooden railing is visible, leading up to a second floor. The space is bright and minimalist.

Thus, I see the appendix to this thesis as crucial because it describes or implies another sense of practice developed through the research. The appendix consists of discursive academic texts and ‘fits’ nicely into a thesis format. The most interesting function of this appendix, however, is that it manifests the practise(s) of research, which is a direct outcome of this PhD project. It also highlights the collaborative effort of learning as well as making and demonstrates the importance of my engagement with other researchers/artists, which I see as related to the two-way nature of engagement with students.

*What does the art school offer as a site of pedagogic research?* On the one hand, the answer to this question is simple, but on the other, it is complicated, problematic and not bound up with a position of certainty. From the start, I believed that research involving one’s own teaching in the art school could only ever take place from ‘within’, ‘insider research’ on the inside. Principally because this research was on some levels also about the internal research parameters of the institution under scrutiny. Thus, I did not want to be a student at, for example, the Institute of Education, University of London, doing research on an art educational institution like Chelsea College of Art and Design. How could I articulate the way that the art school is a different site, with different discourses and audiences and relationships to the forms of research undertaken within it? It became clear to me that there could be a particular critical potential in situating the work ‘within’, even if that meant undertaking a form of research (pedagogy) that is not generally undertaken in an art school, by an artist.

Over the course of the research, I became more certain of this position, as well as more critical of it too, as its justification is not self-evident and it is crucial to question this position. The critical potential for situating this research within the art school is contingent on an ongoing discussion around the value and potential for

researching 'within'. As a given position, this 'locating' of research adds little or nothing to any kind of debate. Because of this, I will next address some alternatives, and look at how this methodology operated by looking at the literature review for the Teaching Site.

For instance, the decision to focus on literature that relates directly to art and design teaching and learning in Higher Education was taken both as an attempt to delineate a potentially vast field, but more importantly because I saw this literature as the given 'canon' that my research and my teaching practice operates within. It was particularly important to me that this material could come into focus and be scrutinised, as a way to try and understand how the institution conceptualises the teaching/art-practice interrelationship, particularly with regards to ideas of reflection as a teaching and learning tool.

Interestingly, however, this strategy also seemed to disable certain aspects of critical examination. The literature around reflection in teaching and learning became something that was, in a sense, applied. For my own personal understanding and the development of this PhD research, this application was key because it allowed for an articulation of how forms of reflection operate tacitly, implicitly and explicitly within the art school. Questioning how we find ourselves in this position with regards to the reflective learner, however, could have provided a different potential, for instance towards institutional critique, as could a more in-depth exploration of the very situated literature review.

In terms of a discursive process, how was this Site (Site 2, Teaching Site) influenced or discursively defined by the literature on pedagogy under review? As an art educational site there are indications that much of the relevant literature around pedagogy has been selected by researcher with a background in 'pedagogy', specialists in teaching and learning, but perhaps not specialist in art and design. Examining how this site was informed



or moulded by the literature would perhaps reveal the instrumentalised part of this project, for instance the idea of the 'reflective practitioner' and how s/he fits into a programme of effective teaching on a student-centred course. I did find and do discuss the benefits of 'reflective practice', but also how the reflective student is ideally adapted to an educational system where contact time with tutors is increasingly cut down, whereby any failing with regards to the students development can thus be understood as the students own failing, a failing to reflect in the required way, as opposed to a problem with the institution.<sup>13</sup> Could a more extensive exploration of critical pedagogy have been productive? For instance, could Ivan Illich's ideas have been applied or used to teach, explore or critique in this research?<sup>14</sup> Other radical pedagogues, such as Paulo Freire, were examined in the thesis, but perhaps selectively applying certain aspects of his theory (such as praxis), was not without problems, a fact which, in hindsight, could have warranted a more comprehensive analysis of his oeuvre.<sup>15</sup> A similar situation applies to Jacques Ranciere: I use his notion of the *indisciplinary*, but simultaneously do not explore and critically consider *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (a key text for understanding Ranciers's pedagogic propositions), as it did not fit into the broader logic of this thesis process.<sup>16</sup> However, this is a key text both for critical pedagogy and for developing some of the practices that are now framed as part of the 'educational turn'. The link between politics and pedagogy is critical for Illich, Freire and Ranciere, but was not a focus for this research.



To return to the site of the art school, Andrea Fraser has usefully pointed out that by considering the educational institution as a given, with the associated literature and

13 See Angela Devas in, 'Reflection as confession: discipline and docility in/on the student body', *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education*, 3 (1) 2004, pp. 33-46.

14 Ivan Illich, *Deschooling society*: London: Calder and Boyars, 1971.

15 Paulo Freire, and Myra Bergman Ramos, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1972.

16 Jacques Ranciere, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five lessons in intellectual emancipation*. Stanford University Press, 1991.

ontological grounding unchallenged, as a researcher I can be seen to be part of the disowning of the 'creation and perpetuation' of the status quo.<sup>17</sup> I am already deeply implicated. The 'insider researcher' position here could have presented an opportunity for sustained scrutiny, but my growing awareness of this situation is not revealed in the thesis. It does, however, inform a burgeoning critical understanding of my role within the institution and my various practices within it and without.

*What is the problem with models?* A troublesome issue with this thesis is that parts of it, particularly elements within the third site, can be read as a polemic, as offering a model or an answer to a perceived problem. However, the offering of a model was not my intention but is linked instead to my desire to project art pedagogic research into new areas of teaching, presentation and performance, and ultimately to make a claim for new knowledge (a requirement for successful doctoral research). However, I would encourage the reader not to read this thesis as a polemic or as a solution-orientated model for pedagogic research in or on the art school.

If the FLAG project, which is the research focus of the third part of the thesis (Reflexive Praxis Site) intended to set up some kind of 'model', it would be a 'reflexive model'. However, paired like this here, the words reflexive and model read almost like an oxymoron since reflexivity can be seen in opposition to the idea of constructing models that might in some way be exemplary, that should be uncritically emulated. Reflexivity in the context of this research aligns with ideas of method rather than ideas of models. In this respect FLAG shared many of the concerns that developed broadly within the 'educational turn' in the art world during the first decade of the 21st century. This 'turning', for want of a better word, does not express its intentions polemically, nor develops models to emulate but rather, a series of discrete events

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17 Andrea Fraser, 'From the Critique of Institutions to an institution of Critique', *Artforum*, September 2005, Volume 44, no. 1, pp. 278–283.

and texts propose creative, alternative pedagogic encounters. Here the emphasis is on cultural production, collaboration and the levelling of hierarchical structures, and in this respect, FLΔG (which utilised a reflexive methodology and promoted student/tutor collaboration) fits with these concerns. On my part FLΔG was a project that emerged from my research, in particular from the work with Future Reflections Research Group, rather than from my long standing art practice. Thus, I was not the expert. Instead, the project drew on the skills and knowledge of all the participant, students and tutors alike.

Though FLΔG was very much aware of the 'post-institutional' drive of the educational turn, it was simultaneously very conscious that here it was taking place within one, an art school. FLΔG in a sense, posited a re-turn, a turning back to the academy thus enabling questions around some of the basic tenets of the educational turn. This fact highlights a particular potential here, that by drawing on specific forms of artistic practice in pedagogy those practices are critically explored and engaged with in a different way to those arising within the art world(s) of the museum, gallery or alternative space. The educational turn does not represent a model or solution to a problem either in the art world, or in the educational institution, but it has brought into focus the critical potential for the art world/art school relationship to be under an ongoing and particular scrutiny.<sup>18</sup>

There are many more groups and artists that could have been explored as part the research for a collaborative art educational project.<sup>19</sup> I ended up looking at those perhaps most generally associated with, or in some way signalling, the educational turn in the art world. I could have examined other artists and curators, some of which could be, arguably, more relevant to a sense of the

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18 See for example Paul O'Neill & Mick Wilson (eds.), *Curating and the Educational turn*, Open Editions, 2010.

19 Including but not limited to, for example, The Artist Placement Group (APG), or Islington Mill Art Arcademy.

‘critical potential’ of the educational turn, particularly with respects to the art school and art pedagogy as situated in specific cultural and political context. For instance, the work of the artist collective Chto Delat?, (What is to be done?), go far beyond the educational turn through its political engagement and activism.<sup>20</sup> Since 2006, when my research began or 2009, when FLAG formed, the educational landscape in the UK has shifted into new terrain after the Conservative government was voted into power May 2010. This includes the introduction of increased tuition fees, which can be seen to have fundamentally changed the educational site of Chelsea BAFA. A similar project undertaken now would inevitably have a more explicitly political dimension in its exploration of the relationship between the university and society.



Some artists/curators work relating to the educational turn was a response to the Bologna accord, the alignment of educational systems across Europe.<sup>21</sup> Chto Delat?, by contrast, has a more far reaching and political agenda. Thus the group presents itself as a new kind of institution, as a community-building tool where artistic research is brought towards an actualisation of leftist theory. In this respect the group represent a response to particular political and artistic conditions of current Russian life and pedagogy is an important connecting part of this endeavour. The problems of the art school or the problems and possibilities of art production do not operate within discrete zones but are symptomatic of aspects of society as a whole. As such the political and economic realities of art education continue to inform and determine FLAG’s ongoing practice.<sup>22</sup>

Closer to home, the Central Saint Martins-based Double Agents research group sets up ‘two-way channels’ between artists’ practice and the art school. This research

20 See Chto Delat? website, <http://www.chtodelat.org>, (accessed 20.02.12).

21 For example A.C.A.D.E.M.Y exhibition in Hamburg, Antwerp, Eindhoven, 2006-7.

22 See <http://flagcollective.org> for FLAG’s current and past work.



group considers a range of artist practice as relevant to this endeavour.<sup>23</sup> However, there is a particular link between their 4D pathway (moving image, sound, performance, installation and photography) on the Fine Art course and this research project. The work of Double Agents is exemplary of the critical potential in encouraging scrutiny and dialogue on the interrelationship between art practices and art teaching. Here, artist practices are not seen as models for emulation but instead, artists construct 'model projects', which students are invited to take part in and contribute to, simultaneously learning and building their practice whilst opening the practice up for exploration and interrogation. This research articulates the problems of models in a nutshell: a practice' potential as a model can be more critical if the setting up is simultaneously undone by some act of joint scrutiny and engagement.



The omission in the thesis of artist groups like Chto Delat? or research projects like Double Agents are related to the attempt to have an overriding research narrative within the thesis, one that is communicable and coherent. The problems and contradictions of describing numerous relevant project that were occurring at the same time as my own was daunting and a decision to not take on further projects or material is difficult. There is, however, great scope for future research into these art projects and practices, by myself and others, beyond this PhD.

The title for my research project when it began in 2006 was *Making knowledge/Teaching Knowledge*, a title that I was advised to rethink because the coupling was too contentious in the context of art research. I agreed to rethink the title in part because I did not think that the research could begin to make claims about understanding the nature of artistic knowledge. As I write in March 2013, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, recently put on an exhibition with an associated research seminar series entitled, *Making Knowledge*. This seems

23 See Double Agent website <http://www.doubleagents.org.uk>

indicative of two things: from start to finish this research project has been looking towards an understanding of art as a 'knowledge producing' activity, and considered the need to articulate, share and engage critically with this production and its outcomes, including through teaching and learning. It also suggests that exhibitions and research seminars can be speculative in a way that a thesis cannot because on some level a thesis should be at least momentarily resolved as it has to be examined and 'pass' assessment through the demonstration of a series of learning outcomes, towards a new knowledge claim.



In using sites as a methodological framework for this thesis, I hoped that it would facilitate a particular kind of critical engagement, not simply manifest and circumscribe these sites as recognisable comfortable notions devoid of critical potentiality. In the conclusion to *One Place After Another*, a text seminal to this research and the thesis, Miwon Kwon states that a critical notion of site now needs to allow *apparent oppositions* to sustain relations. The construction of a reflective site, as an art and pedagogy research project should allow for some degree of productive confusion, contradiction and even desperation. The sites of this research were at times in conflict with what we could call the *site* of the PhD where confusion has to make way for communicability, and not knowing with forms of knowing.

As an introduction to the thesis, this prologue suggests that the text is read on the understanding that under the smooth page lies apparent opposites sustaining a variety of relations and that developing the critical potential for these relations is an ongoing project.

*Photos used in the Prologue are by Marsha Bradfield, Alex Blackman, Billy Tang and Katrine Hjelde.*



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## Preface

This research project is the result of several factors fortuitously coming together in space and time.

*Funding:* The PhD was made possible by CLIP CETL (Creative Learning in Practice Centre for Excellency in Teaching and Learning) being established across Chelsea College of art and Design and London College of Fashion. CLIP CETL was one of the 74 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning established throughout England and was set up with £4.5 million of funding over 5 years from the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The equipment and resource allocation was £2 million and the remainder funded numerous projects to reward excellent teaching practice, and to further invest in that practice so that it would deliver substantial benefits to students, teachers, colleges and the University.<sup>1</sup>

CLIP CETL facilitated a range of works across University of the Arts London (UAL), in general, and Chelsea and London College of Fashion in particular. Major research projects across a range of pedagogic areas were undertaken, including widening participation and a mapping of the educational landscape within UAL. Teacher training was funded and facilitated on a large scale. CLIP CETL also made two doctoral bursaries available, one of which I received, enabling me to commence the research presented here. The CETL's were a particular drive from the government to acknowledge the importance of Teaching and Learning on the students experience within Higher Education, and thus represent a particular historical moment of educational policy in the UK. The immediate impact of CLIP CETL on my practice as a teacher and as an artist can be found in this thesis, but the effect of this bursary will go on to form and develop the interrelationship between my practices for years to come.

*The educational turn and art research:* This research was also inspired by the recent upsurge of practice-based art research within the art academy. The possibility of undertaking such work and considering this as a contribution to knowledge was key to the development of this study and to how the project unfolded. I have, in this respect, benefited greatly from the emerging research culture at Chelsea College of Art and Design (now Camberwell, Chelsea, Wimbledon Graduate School) and UAL. In addition, the 'educational turn' in the art world, (where forms of pedagogy are seen as art), has evolved in parallel to this research, which means that it has been topical in a way that I did not envisage, making this process more linked to a 'zeitgeist' than I imagined at the outset.

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<sup>1</sup> CLIP CETL, <http://www.arts.ac.uk/librarylearningandteaching/clipcetl/>, (accessed 02.12.12).



*Personal practice teaching interrelationship:* I have, since my own BA and MA, had an interest in ideas around visual knowledge and practice-based knowledge production. Partly this interest was fostered by my initial academic studies, and the way knowledge was understood here in contrast to the way it was framed with the art school. At the point of commencing the research, I had already taught for ten years and was becoming increasingly aware of, and curious about the way that the artists practice comes into teaching and I realised that the interrelationships at play in my own case were shifting and evolving. My own art education and practice was sometimes problematic as a reference point in the encounter with students, and I was beginning to become concerned about the student/teacher encounter in relation to a students' practice.

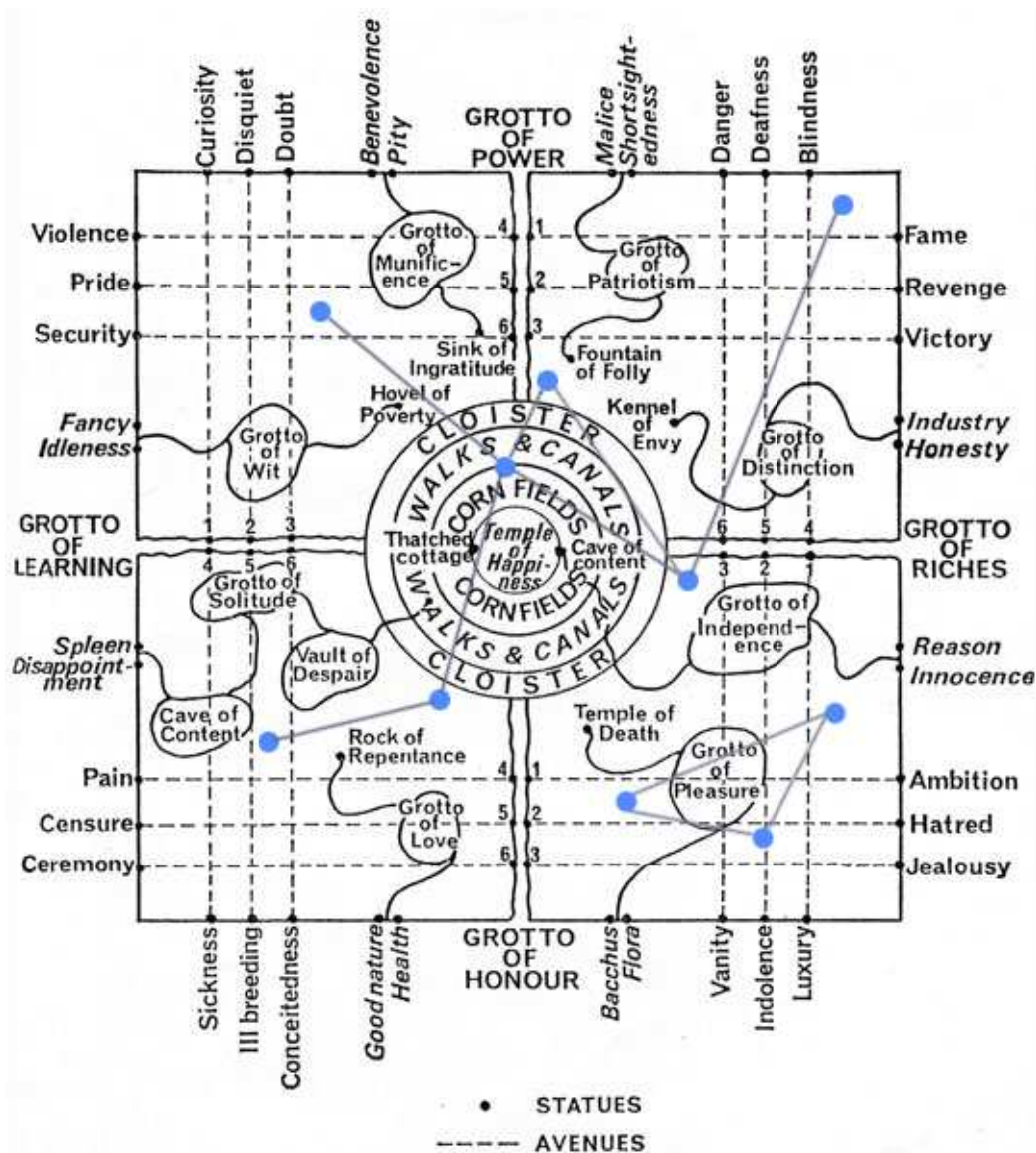
Thus, a private quest intersected with the development of practice-based research and the 'educational turn' in the art world, and a formalised research project was made possible through a targeted government funding opportunity. I am in no doubt about the benefits this research has had on my own development as a teacher and artist, and I hope it can also contribute to the existing interface between art pedagogy, art research and art practice.



Fig. 1. *The Moral Rock Garden*

Map of a proposed rock garden, designed by Aaron Hill in 1734. A version of this map is on the home page of my website, [www.katrinehjelde.net](http://www.katrinehjelde.net). Map found in David Watkin, *Thomas Hope, 1769-1831 and the Neo-Classical idea*, Murray, 1968.

## Mapping the Sites:





The quintessential mechanism we have for sustained and responsible [art] teaching is reflection. Reflection held in conversation, using our experience like a concave mirror.<sup>1</sup>

## 0.1 Introduction

Reflection held in conversation, experience as a mirror; this evocative phrase by Brian Catling resonated deeply when I first came across it and was fundamental for germinating and subsequently developing a research proposal. The outcome of this initial proposal, *Constructing a Reflective Site: Practice between art and pedagogy in the art school* is a fine art practice-based research project, which examines the relationship between art and teaching practices, and more specifically my art and my teaching practice. The resultant project amounts to an investigation into the ways that this relationship operates in the context of teaching and learning within university level fine art education.

For the art academy, this relationship is crucial for considering where knowledge resides and what we believe this knowledge to consist of. This thesis employs the idea and concept of *reflection*, as proposed by Catling, as both the lens and as a tool to analyse the principal themes of research. Reflection is neither one specific thing nor one concept. Framed as a lens, reflection can be seen to refract because it is a locus of both complementary and competing ideas around teaching and learning, knowledge production (epistemologies directed increasingly toward developing the tradition and trajectory of artistic research). In addition, the notion of reflection is situated within a particular Western tradition of self-development, as well as being connected with certain moral and ethical modalities. Reflection has, since the publication of Donald Schön's book *The Reflective Practitioner* in 1983, become a somewhat ubiquitous concept for practice-based subjects within higher education, from nursing to art and design, and is in some danger of meaning all things to all people. A major task of this research was thus to untangle the various meanings of reflection and understand the scope of choice available for this study, and the consequences this could have towards understanding the interplay between art practice and teaching.

## 0.2 Research subject

The starting point for this research was my personal need to understand and evaluate the meeting point between practice and teaching in art. Specifically, it was

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1 Brian Catling, 'The Invisible Subject (Views from the missionary position)', in Furlong, E., Gould, P., Hethrington, P. (ed.), *The Dynamic of Now*, London, Tate Gallery Publishing, 2000, p.196.

concerned with how my own practice as an artist relates to my teaching practice and how I could make an understanding of this relationship useful, productive and critical not only for my own practice but, far more importantly, for that of my students' emerging practices. The *research aim* was to explore the potential of the artists'/educators' practice within the art school, here at Chelsea College of Art and Design, in order to make teaching function as a critical link between the practices of the professional and the students. This research concludes with the belief that this relationship is one that should not be formalised in order to create a foundation for an applicable teaching model. Artists' practices in the current environment are manifold and multifarious whereas teaching practices are linked to and closely involved with learning outcomes and assessment criteria within the contemporary art school setting. This research focuses on reflection as one way to approach the interrelationship, and asks *what is reflection within fine art teaching and learning*. Can the concept be usefully employed to describe and critically approach the relationship between practices as embodied by tutors and those being developed by their students, within fine art? A further question is: how might insight into the relation between artist and art student's practice contribute to current notions of developing a shared body of knowledge within the academy?

From the research aim follows a set of objectives, which structured the research project as a whole:

- To review the current literature on how practice informs teaching.
- To critically evaluate this understanding in the context of contemporary art practice and art as research, including identifying the mechanisms by which I recognise and define visual understanding in my own practice.
- From this point, develop models for how this process can be used critically and transparently in a teaching context.
- In light of the objectives above, to propose, apply and evaluate a pedagogical approach, drawing on theoretical understanding that accommodates contemporary art practice.

For ethical and practical reasons the main focus of the research became my own practice, which encompasses art production and teaching. Given that these practice(s) are very much located within groups (students, staff, etc.) contained by an institutional setting, ranging from the gallery space to the academy, its components are both dialogical and contingent. There are, furthermore, significant ethical problems associated with undertaking research in relation to one's own students and this and associated ethical aspects will be discussed in section 2.1.1.

### 0.3 Research Contribution

The outcomes of this research can be seen to contribute to the fields of fine art pedagogy and artistic research. Firstly, and most importantly, by both exploring and applying forms of reflection to the research project, I found that reflection in teaching and learning is not necessarily the same as reflection within an artistic practice, or within art research. This has consequences both for art students (when asked to critically reflect on their work) and for developing the emerging field of artistic research and concepts of artistic knowledge. I will reason that this discovery also highlights the need to examine contemporary arts practices for models contributing to subject-specific pedagogies in fine art in order to keep the interrelationship between the subject and the academy critical and productive. This research found that it is possible and productive to argue for particular traditions of pedagogy as found within the discipline and practice of art.

Secondly, the research methodology developed for the project thesis can be seen as a contribution to the emerging methodologies of practice-based art research, and to subject-specific pedagogic research, such as in fine art. In particular, I will show that the application of an art-based structure, in this case the notion of *site-specificity*, proved a novel but productive research strategy supportive of what Rancière has called 'indisciplinary' work.<sup>2</sup> Using the structure of *sites*, I created generative delineations in order to approach areas more commonly seen and understood as disciplines, like pedagogy, and fine art. This structure also made allowances for the histories and traditions of the disciplines traversed.

Thirdly, I propose that the research can be seen to be a contribution to an examination of the complicated idea of pedagogy as art practice: both; as it operates as an art practice, in the art world (outside of the art academy), in what has been termed the 'educational turn' in contemporary art, but more importantly in this context, as it functions within the academy (with particular regard to how tutors frame the interrelationship between their practice and their teaching).

### 0.4 Research approach

The research was undertaken from within a dual denotation and understanding of practice: as art and teaching. The notion of practice-based research that was applied to address these areas was adopted from emerging positions and methods in artistic research. The research project arose from the meeting point between fine arts practice and teaching, thus approaching the discipline or field of pedagogy from the very specific, culturally and temporally located arena of western

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2 'Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinary' an interview by Marie-Aude Baronian and Mireille Rosello translated by Gregory Elliot in *Art & Research* vol. 2, no.1, 2008 [www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/jrinterview.html](http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/jrinterview.html), (accessed 02.05.10).



contemporary arts practice. There is a long history of arts-based pedagogy, from Vasari to the present, and this research builds on this tradition whilst critically examining how the research can question, as well as contribute to this tradition.<sup>3</sup> As reflection became a key term as well as being the central concept behind this research, it was particularly important to engage with philosophical, pedagogical and arts-based models of reflection in order to formulate and conduct the research.

As noted above, as the research progressed, parallels appeared between the project and a key area of emerging interest within contemporary arts, i.e., 'the educational turn', where artists, curators and even non-academic institutions appropriate forms of pedagogy as a mode of practice.<sup>4</sup> This interest has its roots in relational art practices and can be seen as signalling a particular desire for content production in art practice, a shift in the practice/audience relationship as well as a growing unease with the direction and development of art education, which is becoming increasingly standardised and unified.<sup>5</sup> This interest in pedagogy as art and the problems of the contemporary art school is currently shared across most of the Western art world, not just the UK or Europe. The Bologna Accord from 1999 has inadvertently altered how we can understand artistic practice in terms of research and knowledge, so we are not just dealing with perceived problems and challenges but also a fundamental shift in the conception of what art education is or should be.<sup>6</sup>

This particular *mêlée* of issues, from art as research to pedagogy as art, has made this project interesting, but also challenging — particularly in terms of determining its focus. Insights arising during the research have revealed how contemporary art practices that appropriate education as their medium (such as relational, discursive, practices and artistic and curatorial practices) raise new questions regarding the mechanisms by which practice informs or can inform teaching, and the insights

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3 Giorgio Vasari, Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, *The Lives of the Artists* (Oxford University Press; Oxford, 1991).

Arthur, D Efland, *A History of art Education: Intellectual and Social Currents in Teaching in the Visual Arts* New York Teachers College Press, 1990.

Carl Goldstein, *Teaching Art: Academies and Schools from Vasari to Albers*, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

4 Irit Rogoff, 'Turning', *e-flux journal* #0, 11/2008, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/18>, (accessed 18.03.11).

5 'So if the transformative function is what we are after, an exhibition may not be the place to start. Perhaps the school as model can point the way to recuperating the agency of art in the absence of an effective public.' Anton Vidokle, 'From Exhibition to School', *Art School*, Madoff, H. (ed.), MIT Press, 2009, p.193.

6 Dieter Lesage has stated '...the Bologna Process, in a way that is completely unintentional, may eventually contribute to the end of the hegemony of the natural sciences in the field of research.' in 'Who's Afraid of Artistic Research? On measuring artistic research output', *Art & Research*, Vol. 2 No. 2, Spring 2009, <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n2/lesage.html> (accessed 30.05.10).

achieved here influenced the unfolding of the research process.

Both the ongoing development of artistic research and the similarly expanding 'educational turn' in the art world resulted in a sudden upsurge in material both relevant and potentially applicable to this study. This ongoing expansion of the research field stimulated and energised my ambition for the research to contribute to the discussions around the future of the art school, particularly in relation to its intersection with contemporary art practices. This dialogue gives increasing importance to practice-based art research, particularly in so far as it renegotiates understanding of knowledge within fine art and fine art teaching.

As an artist, I had (and still have in some senses) a relatively 'conventional' practice. For instance, prior to the onset of this project, I was not involved with relational practices, nor did I see teaching as part of my art practice (in the sense of pedagogy as an artistic practice). My work was mostly materially-based or reliant, and my own training had been very discipline specific: I was trained throughout my BA and MA as a painter. This research project has thus changed how I think about my practice, the work that I undertake as my practice as well as how I conceptualise the relationship between teaching and my practice, and in practical terms, how I undertake teaching,

The desire to undertake this research was multifarious. I had been a practicing artist for ten years and I had taught for nearly the same amount of time, in different institutions. The two areas, practice and teaching, were for me both interlinked and held in tension, and I wanted to reflect on what this meant or why this was. Secondly, increasingly I was teaching on courses that were not subject-specific. This led me to think about what I could teach, what my knowledge in the field was and how any kind of knowledge is made sense of in a fine art teaching and learning encounter. Finally, I had since my MA, been interested in undertaking a PhD but was concerned how this might force me to instrumentalise my practice towards the research. To work across both my art practice and the teaching practice was both a way to bring two key aspects of my life together in a meaningful way, and also to agitate one against the other. Crucially, it was a way to circumnavigate my anxieties around the Fine Art PhD, anxieties that I have since found to be very common both amongst those who do and do not undertake practice-based fine art research.<sup>7</sup>

I hope to show that the expanded way of understanding proposed here, in which a

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7 Fiona Candlin, 'A proper anxiety? Practice-based PhDs and academic unease', *Working Papers in Art and Design* 1, 2000, [http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes\\_research/papers/wpades/vol1/candlin2.html](http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol1/candlin2.html), (accessed 09.07.11).

practice is seen as including a range of related activities, can contribute to a new appreciation of practice in art, art teaching and art research.

Thus, this research revolves around key notions and structures, which, as far as possible, have also been harnessed and applied methodologically. Each of these terms appears in different ways, within different disciplines, but also from theories to practices within the same field, and as a result do not have singular meaning. In preparation for the following discussion, I will first introduce the terms as I have used them; each will be revisited and revised at various stages of this thesis, as usage shifts with the different terrain of the research.

*Practice/Praxis:* This is a practice-based research project. The notion of ‘a practice’ is not straightforward (and particularly not in this case as it feeds on and explores two interlinked practices — teaching and making in fine art, each with its own traditions and understandings of what constitutes a practice). Bordieu’s notion of practice from *The Logic of Practice*, as neither unconscious or conscious, drawn on what we take for granted was the starting point for the project, but Schön’s use of practice in *The Reflective Practitioner*, where it is coupled with reflection, soon emerges as the dominant definition as the research unfolded.<sup>8</sup> Over the duration of this project, however, the notion of practice has steadily been shifting towards exploring a notion of praxis. Praxis is the process by which a theory, lesson, or skill is enacted or practiced. For praxis, practice in a public sphere is performative and enacted, and praxis is, as such, a particularly useful model for a discussion of art teaching which can be productively considered as a particular, publicly performed, enactment of an art practice.

*Reflection/reflexion:* This whole project can be seen as a multi-faceted, critical reflection on the relationship between practice and teaching. Consequently, theories of reflection have been used as a conceptual framework for the research and as a method in the research process. I have drawn upon, in particular, Donald Schön and Jürgen Habermas who have differing philosophical conceptions of reflection. In addition, I have explored what we might consider as *art-based* forms of reflection, like Dan Graham’s exploration of reflective materials, or that articulated by Michel Foucault when discussing *Las Meninas* by Diego Velázquez.<sup>9</sup> The terms reflective and reflexive are often used synonymously and can to some degree be

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8 Bordieu, Pierre, *The Logic of Practice*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1980.

Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner How Professionals Think in Action*, Ashgate Publishing, 1991.

9 Schön *ibid*, Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1971, Dan Graham, *Two way mirror power*, Alexander Alberro, (ed), Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999, Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Routledge Classics, 2004.

interchanged.<sup>10</sup> For this research it has proved more useful to distinguish the term reflexive as being a *specific form* of reflective work, involving reflection on several levels or directed at several themes at the same time.<sup>11</sup> As reflection and reflexion are foundational for the whole project these terms and their shifting meanings will be explored and utilised in each part of the thesis.

*Site:* The notion of site has been key for ideas addressed here, as a container for the subject of interest without resorting to the default definitions of the situated subjects involved, art and pedagogy. Site emerged from a particular notion of practice in my own art practice, as a strategy and structure for managing a diverse field drawing on the disciplines of fine art and pedagogy, but also related disciplines, like cultural theory, philosophy, and art history. Expanding on the possibility of *discursive sites* as defined by Miwon Kwon, I have attempted to construct the thesis as a series of discursive sites, as an art-based research approach, and as a methodology.<sup>12</sup>

*Knowledge:* A problematic concept in relation to art practices as well as ideas around an art curriculum. The word is used in this study, however, because it is in full use within the domain of higher education and research. So although this research, follows Stephen Scrivener's use of knowledges (in the plural sense) rather than knowledge, knowledge is still used as a term to locate the work within a particular historical and cultural trajectory, in which fine art has been reframed as an academic subject of study at the highest university level of scholarship.<sup>13</sup>

## 0.5 Thesis structure

The main part of the thesis consists of three sites, each with its own practice/literature review and ensuing methodology. The supporting literature is introduced in relation to the main concepts as employed during the research process and relevant artist practices are employed similarly.

1. Site 1 begins by introducing the idea of site as an organising principle and as part of the methodology. The methods used and their interrelationship with the relevant theory are discussed for this site, but also with relevance for the other sites. It then continues by examining notions of art practice, including my own art practice as an artist and artistic art researcher. Selected art projects

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10 Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldberg, *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research*, London: SAGE, 2000.

11 Alvesson and Sköldberg, *ibid.*

12 Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another Site specific Art and Locational Identity*, MIT Press, 2004.

13 Stephen Scrivener, 'The Art Object does not Embody a Form of Knowledge', in *Research into Practice Vol. 2*, University of Hertfordshire, 2002. [http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes\\_research/papers/wpades/vol2/scrivener.html](http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol2/scrivener.html), (accessed 22.06.11).

undertaken during the research period are discussed, with particular emphasis on the concepts of reflection and knowledge. The chapter begins by tracing a genealogy of reflection as the foundation for the research undertaken here and in the further chapters. This part also locates the research project in a relation between art and art research and begins to consider its *indisciplinary* dimension.

2. Site 2 explores teaching practice within the educational site, which in this project is BA Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art and Design, and analyses the activities undertaken during the research that come under the umbrella of curriculum-based teaching and learning. Here too, reflection will be shown to be a key method, with knowledge and reflection being explored in relation to the specific issues of teaching and learning in a contemporary art school. The ethical issues involved in this part of the research are also elaborated and treated in depth.
3. Site 3 charts the development of a joint project with a group of students which attempted to set up a particular kind of reflective site. The project, called FLAG, attempted to facilitate a reflective and reflexive site aiming for a joint praxis, which intersected my practices with the emerging, singular and joint, practices of the students. This project was thus both the culmination of the research, an *outcome* in research terms, and an act of research in itself.

The conclusion summarises the outcomes of this research and the contributions to knowledge claimed.

*Appendix:* includes the most relevant papers for this thesis published during this research project, written as joint or sole author. The appendix is thus a significant part of my practice submission, with forms of writing that emerged from both academic and traditional genres to more art-based or art-oriented forms. The art practice component to this submission, otherwise exists as images within the thesis and as other forms of documentation, including information found on the following websites:

- [www.katrinehjelde.net](http://www.katrinehjelde.net)
- [www.futurereflections.org.uk](http://www.futurereflections.org.uk)
- [www.flagcollective.org](http://www.flagcollective.org)

The form of the thesis submission was a source of concern, a concern that I think is shared by many practice-based art researchers. An exhibition, display or other practice submission, would set up a dichotomy between the thesis and what we

might determine as the more 'material stuff'. As far as possible practice in the sense of making and doing, and its outcomes, within the research had to be as fully integrated into the text as possible. The layout of each part (site) of the thesis is thus (subtly) different, in an attempt to create meaning through the form as well as the content of the document.

The relationship and the tension between form and content in the thesis is related to the tension implicit in an exploration of teaching as a *critical link* between tutors' and students' art practices. However tenuous this comparison might seem it is useful as it signals that this document, as a provider of meaning, draws on very disparate forms of knowledge including embodied, subjective, visual, and material forms. These all come into a teaching learning encounter in the art school, but what is particular for this thesis is *how* they come into the encounter, if determining this process can create a critical link, critical in the sense of evaluative, between a tutor's art practice and a student's art practice within the teaching encounter.

Image 1. Katrine Hjelde, *Untitled* 2006, two way mirror installation with inkjet print, H288x W 450x990x1260x220cm. Permanent installation for Holocaust Museum, Villa Grande, Oslo, Norway, with b+r architects. Photo: Matthew Flintham.



## Site 1: Art Practice







## The artist as the ultimate reflective practitioner?<sup>1</sup>

### 1.0 Introduction

In 2005, I came across a book by Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another, Site Specific Art and Locational Identity*. This publication was to change my understanding of site and site-specificity in relation to my art practice, and to have a profound impact on my work and my thinking.<sup>2</sup> I had loosely applied the term site-specific to my practice prior to this encounter, but this text suggested a framework for critically re-evaluating my (past) practice and, in the process, provided a direction for new work. I anticipated that Kwon's genealogies of site would influence this research project and wondered if, rather than operating as a tacit influence, this thesis could textually and theoretically explore notions of site-specificity, by proposing the possibility of *discursive sites* as a thesis structure. Thus, the art practice site, my first 'discursive site', starts with an exploration of its construction, which also frames and (in)forms the other sites within this thesis, Site 2: Teaching Practice and Site 3: Reflexive Praxis.<sup>3</sup> The word site in this thesis is thus linked to the genre of site-specificity in art, but it is generally not linked to a spatial location or place in the more commonplace, physical sense. Ultimately, I hope that the entire thesis can operate as a *reflective site*. To make sense of this proposition, I will start by framing and underpinning the idea of site as I have used it here.

Unpacking the second term of my coupling of reflection and site in this research, *reflection*, is equally crucial for understanding both the theoretical and practical construction of the thesis. Unlike site, however, the way the term reflection is being used could not be fixed. Instead within each section a different aspect or understanding of reflection has been harnessed, explored and tested. Within this first section, I considered a philosophical and etymological grounding of reflection, which serves as a point of departure for the later sections in this site, and for the other sites.

The starting point for the 'appropriation' of reflection was similar to the way I approached site-specificity. For years, I have applied or used reflection as an idiom, both literally and metaphorically in relation to my practice. For that reason,

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1 Question raised by John Cowan's paper 'How can students of art and design best be helped to learn and develop', in Paul Hetherington (ed.), *Artists in the 1990s: Their Education and Values*. London: Tate Gallery Publishing, pp. 28-33, 1994.

2 Kwon, *One Place After Another*.

3 I will refer at times to these more informally as Practice Site, Teaching Site and Praxis Site.

I was also becoming increasingly interested, as well as somewhat confused, by the ways that I was asked to encourage forms of reflection through teaching. For instance, I had to suggest to my students that they undertake forms of reflection, from keeping learning journals or through self-evaluation forms.<sup>4</sup> My own art installations often deployed the medium of reflective surfaces, including two-way mirrors, and thus an early priority of the research was to explore reflection, from the literal to the theoretical, as found in art practice and in philosophy, as the foundation of a pedagogical frame. At this point, I hoped that I could make sense of the different things that reflection seems to mean or suggest, and the different potentials these meanings might have for art and teaching practice.

The *Practice Site*, begins by considering the literature relevant to this undertaking. It starts with Kwon's genealogy of site-specificity, and then goes on to an examination of the principal thinkers behind reflection: Dewey, Habermas and Schön. This then leads to an explanation of how the methodology deployed in this thesis emerged from this theoretical exploration as well as from my own art practice. From here the first research 'case study' unfolds. As the Practice Site is part of a practice-based thesis there is an (inevitable) discussion of the role of practice — and my approach to it — but as this is also applicable to the other sites, it serves a function beyond reiterating a status quo. Through the construction of a Practice Site, I am attempting to understand how knowledge can be said to be constructed, found, formed or shared through (a reflective) art practice. This section asks, what are the forms of reflection found in my practice and how do these fit with some contemporary and historical ideas of knowledge production in or through art practice?

### 1.1. Site

In this thesis the term site is central to the methodological framework of the research process. It serves a complex and nuanced function in describing the interrelations between different research outcomes. Understanding what a site is, or can be for this PhD, is in this sense, foundational.

Miwon Kwon's key text, *One Place after Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity* is generally considered by artists and theorists to be a seminal text on the subject of site-specificity.<sup>5</sup> Here a site can contain or relate to a number of disciplines, but it also relates to *place*, physically and culturally. Site is thus

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4 I am not referring specifically to Chelsea College of Art and Design here. At the time I was teaching in several different art schools and universities, each with a different approach to this issue.

Jennifer Moon's book on learning journals outlines typical methods for reflecting on learning. Jennifer, A Moon, *Learning Journals: A Handbook for Reflective Practice and Professional Development*, London: Routledge, 2006.

5 Kwon, *One Place After Another*.

broader, looser, more permeable and yet more situated than the term discipline.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, it is a key term in contemporary arts practice, used with increasing precision by both artists and theorists. Hence, this PhD project was conceived as a site-specific project in a similar way to other work undertaken as art practice. I wanted to find out if and how I could use the term and concept of site, and this ambition thus became one of the objectives of the research.

Kwon sets out to unpack and define site-specificity, not just as an artistic genre, but as what she terms a *problem-idea*, which is defined as a particular nexus of art and spatial politics.<sup>7</sup> Kwon seeks to reframe site-specificity as the cultural negotiation of broader social, economic and political processes, and carefully makes the distinction between different kinds of site-related practice in order to reactivate site-specificity as a critical concept, one with potential for critical application by artists, art historians and theorists. Kwon's genealogy of site-specific practices addresses competing and overlapping definitions in past and present site-oriented art, as well as within some specific artists' practices. These definitions can be broken down as follows:

1. Site as an actual and physical location.
2. Site as a cultural framework defined by the institutions of art.
3. Site as a mobile, discursive narrative.

Site as an actual and physical location, dealing with grounded, tangible and unique elements, is perhaps the most well known understanding and conception of site-specificity. This is the understanding Kwon applies to works by artist such as Richard Serra, Robert Smithson and Richard Long. Kwon discusses *Tilted Arch* by Serra, 1981-1989, as an example of how the concept of site-specificity enables a critique of the modernist idea of autonomous sculpture by setting up an inseparable link between the work and its site. As Serra stated when it was suggested that *Tilted Arch* be moved, 'to move the work is to destroy the work'.<sup>8</sup>

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6 By discipline, I mean an academic discipline, as a branch of knowledge that is taught and researched at university level.

7 Kwon, *One Place After Another*, p. 2.

8 Richard Serra, *Writings Interviews*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994. p. 194. Tilted arch stood, in Federal Plaza in Manhattan for eight years. Local opposition to the work resulted in a public hearing in 1985 and a jury voted that the piece should be dismantled and removed. Serra sued the federal government over the issue of ownership but, after a court battle, lost his appeal. In May 1989 the piece was cut into three parts and consigned to a New York warehouse. Sean O'Hagan, *The Observer*, Sunday 5 October 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2008/oct/05/serra.art>, (accessed 22.12.11).

Site as a cultural framework defined by the institutions of art, means art practices that challenge the idea of neutrality of space. Practices often labelled 'institutional critique' are typical for this category. Relevant artists include Daniel Buren, Mierle Lademan Ukeles and Andrea Fraser. These artists have, in different ways, explored the ideological and commercial function of museums and galleries. For instance, Ukeles 1973 performance series of *Maintenance Art*, included the act of scrubbing museum floors, thus highlighting the invisible labour in the institution and the hierarchical labour divisions in the museum.<sup>9</sup> Site, in this institutional sense, is still linked to a physical place, but the institutions phenomenological properties are not foregrounded in the way that the political and other power relations are.

Kwon's last kind of site, a mobile, discursive narrative, is the one I have primarily drawn on to establish my own research. Kwon's construction builds on James Meyer's notion of a functional site: '[the functional site] is a process, an operation accruing between sites, a mapping of institutional and discursive filiations and the bodies that move between them'.<sup>10</sup> A site understood in this way can, therefore, be an artistic genre or a social cause. It can be literal, like a street corner or a theoretical concept. It can be an artist's practice or it can be a school of pedagogy. Artists who appropriate education as a medium for art making, as part of the 'educational turn', in the form of improvised 'schools', knowledge exchanges, reading groups, lectures, and laboratories can, following Kwon, be seen as developing practices that treat site-specificity in this, its broadest, most discursive, sense. Relevant artists/collectives include Rainer Ganahl and Copenhagen Free University (I will discuss the latter's collaborative practice in Site 3). The notion of a functional discursive site, proved generative for this project since it has allowed me to explore and examine the multifarious areas that I am interested in. This became a way of clarifying the focus of attention whilst avoiding traditional, and for me, more restrictive notions of academic disciplines. The disciplines traversed here are predominantly pedagogy and fine art, two very different disciplines with different histories, fields, terms of engagement and conceptions of research. Fine art pedagogy could be seen as a subset of either discipline. However, the possibilities offered by a discursive site enables me to approach fine art pedagogy as a distinct site, a site that encompasses fine art and pedagogy, but that does not have an indexical relationship to a particular institution, place or discipline. It also allowed me to consider my own practices, as artist and teacher, as sites and as such to look at how knowledge or knowing is or could be critically transferred from one site to another and back again.

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9 Kwon, *One Place After Another*, p.19.

10 James Meyer, 'The Functional Site' in *Platzwechsel*, exh. cat. Zürich, Kunststahle Zürich, 1995, p. 27.

During the research process, I have found that I am not alone in exploring definitions of site. Art historian Ina Blom's text, *On the Style Site*, re-examines the relationship between art and the subject of style.<sup>11</sup> The artworks discussed in her book treat style as particular kind of site, and can therefore be discussed as an extension of what is generally known as 'site-specific practices' in art. This development, for Blom, calls for a new reading of the relationship between art and the 'question of style', one that approaches style not just as an art historical tool or method of explanation, but as a social, mediating site in which the relations between appearance, recognition and identity are negotiated. This notion of sites as mediational is crucial to Blom's investigation and although I did not presume that the sites described here would be mediating in the sense of providing resolution, this potential will be revisited in the last section of the thesis.<sup>12</sup>

In what follows, I will employ both a structure of site-specific practice(s) and attempt a theorisation of site-specific practice. As an artist, teacher and researcher, I have undertaken this research from a position that has emerged from art practice. In this respect, my art practice is the first and primary site of practice, the one which, for me, came first (and also in some senses still comes first) and, hence, the majority of the research presented here originated from it. I think it is important that this be acknowledged. The justification for in some sense privileging art practice is that it was literally the starting position for this endeavour. Furthermore, I am keen to hold on to the art-based starting point as a way of exploring pedagogy by stressing a specificity (to art practice) as a counterpoint to some of the more generic approaches found in teaching and learning literature.<sup>13</sup>

## 1.2 Practice-based research

Declaring the construction of designated sites as a structure, a method and as a theoretical frame can be seen as an attempt to explore what an art-based paradigm of inquiry is or could be. Operating in an unstable and uncertain research area is, to paraphrase Hannula, Souranta, and Vadén, an opportunity, a possibility to contribute to an emerging field.<sup>14</sup> Practice-based art research is still unstable and uncertain. *Practice-based* is not even a precise adjective: for instance Frayling

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11 Ina Blom, *On the Style Site Art, Art, Sociality and Media Culture*, New York: Steinberg Press, 2007.

12 Interestingly, a performance band called the Textfuckers did a performance called 'On the Style Site', based on the text by Ina Blom above, thus designating the book itself as a site to work within and against. *Strange Age Art Festival Podium* (Hausmania), Oslo, 23-24th of July, 2010.

13 See, John Biggs, *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, SRHE and Open University Press Imprint, 2003. Anne Brockbank and Ian McGill, *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2007. John Cowan, *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher*, Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2006.

14 Mika Hannula, Juha Souranta, and Tere Vadén, *Artistic Research: Theories, methods and practices*, Espoo Academy of Fine Art, Helsinki and University of Gothenburg, 2005.

and Borgdorff have set up different typologies for how practice is or can be framed as research. For instance, Borgdorff points out that practice-based, is defined or understood, differently between countries, institutions and individual theorists.

I am using Borgdorff's (who builds on Frayling) trichotomy of practice-based because it seems particularly useful for research which spans more than one area of practice. His three categories are:

- a) Research *on* the arts
- b) Research *for* the arts
- c) Research *in* the arts<sup>15</sup>

Research in the arts, where (artistic) 'practice itself is an essential component of both the research process and the research result', is the key category for this project.<sup>16</sup> Although I refer to this work as practice-based, more accurately the research process involved a combination of the categories above. However, the possibility of *research in the arts* resonates with my ideas of what a practice (in art) is and is capable of. This is true both in terms of an arts practice, but also for a teaching practice.

Despite the recent interest in art research, this is still a contested area and is often presented as an oxymoron, providing both opportunities and pitfalls. Following Stephen Scrivener, art is distinguished by hypotheses and possible interpretations whereas research is characterised by conclusions and certainties.<sup>17</sup> This brief framing identifies a dichotomy, and whilst this paraphrasing does not do justice to the very complex issues of both art and research and their interrelationship as outlined by Scrivener, I think it frames a prejudice that seems to be quite pervasive in the field. For this project, I will adopt a more nuanced interrelational model that is based on the idea of artistic research as practice.<sup>18</sup>

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15 Henk Borgdorff, 'The Debate on Research in the Arts', *Focus on Artistic Research and Development* 2, Bergen: Bergen National Academy of the Arts, 2007 p. 12.

16 Borgdorff, *ibid*, p.13. See Christopher Frayling, 'Research in Art and Design', *Royal College of Art Research Papers* 1 (1):1-5, 1993/1994, for his well known differentiation of 'research into art', 'research for art' and 'research through art'.

17 Stephen Scrivener, 'The Art Object does not Embody a Form of Knowledge', *Working Papers in Art and Design*, 2, 2002, [http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes\\_research/papers/wpades/vol2/scrivenerfull.html](http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol2/scrivenerfull.html), (accessed 12.09.09).

18 'One of the central points and potentialities of artistic research as a practice-based activity is that it is a combination of two kinds of practice: an artistic and a research component'. Mika Hannula, *Catch me if you Can: Chances and Challenges of Artistic Research*, *Art and Research: A journal of Ideas Context and Methods* vol. 2 no. 2, 2009, p. 1.



A practice with a defined direction, but with an open ended undetermined procedural trajectory. A practice that is particular, content-driven, self-critical, self-reflective and contextualized.<sup>19</sup>

According to Hannula artistic research as a practice-based activity is thus distinguished by combining two kinds of practice: an artistic and a research component. Following this premise it seems that this also has consequences for how to approach practice-based research in teaching also. Teaching too can be seen as a developing and owned practice, and this is the conception of teaching that I build on for this research project and thesis.<sup>20</sup> Combining art practice and teaching practice towards a particular kind of knowledge generating activity has repercussions and consequences for our understanding of what practice is and can do. This issues will be discussed in Site 2: Teaching practice.

### 1.3 Methodological approach

The construction of sites allowed for different methods to be used within each site, methods that evolved from the nature of what I set out to discover within each site and from a reflexive response to the research process. The interface between the ontology, epistemology and method in this project is interlaced and even blurred. One problem, as pointed out by Henk Borgdorff, is that ontological questions (like what science and art *are*) often easily become interlinked and woven into questions of method (what the practice should be, or is, within the respective field) and/or epistemological questions (how is meaning/knowledge formed within the fields).<sup>21</sup> Relating to existing paradigms of research inquiry as formulated by Gray and Malins, this project can be seen to emerge from within a Constructivist paradigm, where people are seen to construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. As such, the ontological position for the research is relativist and the epistemology is subjectivist, meaning that inquirer and inquired are fused and any findings are created from the interaction between the two.<sup>22</sup> What this research project shares with many other practice-based art research projects is that it does not fit neatly within this, or other existing, academic paradigms.

Thus, the methodology employed is a consequence of the project's ontological and epistemological presumptions. Overall, the methodological grounding of this research within its component sites can loosely be defined as hermeneutic since I

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19 Hannula, *Catch me if you can*, p.1.

20 Extrapolating on Donald A. Schön's, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, Ashgate Publishing, 1991.

21 Borgdorff, *The Debate on Research in the Arts*.

22 Egon G. Guba, *The Paradigm Dialog*, Sage Publications, 1990 cited in Carole Gray, and Julian Malins, *Visualizing research: A guide to the research process in art and design*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.



am employing the theory and practice of forms of interpretation to make sense of the interaction between the enquirer and enquired. Hannula *et al.* have in *Artistic Research*, suggested that a suitable methodological approach will be in accordance with ‘hermeneutical knowledge-constitutive interests to open up new interpretation into some questions or phenomena’.<sup>23</sup> Building on both Gadamer’s interpretive hermeneutics (through the investigation of the role of reflection in the hermeneutic circle), and on Habermas’ critical hermeneutics, as ‘it is also possible to follow the interest of emancipatory knowledge in artistic research.’<sup>24</sup> This approach stresses the temporal and spatial rootedness of the interpreter and the interpreted alike. Because hermeneutics is, for a theorists like Habermas, so closely linked to his notion of reflection, I wanted to explore how reflection enables understanding. Also significant here, Gadamer has linked hermeneutics to application, in the sense of praxis. In the final site of this thesis — the Praxis Site — I will look at what this means. Gadamer and Habermas share many interests and have influenced each others’ thinking and writing. They are nevertheless, very different thinkers and at times disagree profoundly. I have used secondary literature to understand their nuanced thinking and relevant application for my research. Most useful here have been pedagogues who are concerned with reflection, praxis and critical pedagogy.<sup>25</sup> This thesis does not set out to make philosophical claims, but has tried to find the philosophical grounding of the relevant terms and then used pedagogic (and other) theory to ground these concepts in relation to my own project.

Interpretation is dependant on the identity of the interpreter, the situation as well as their wishes and needs.<sup>26</sup> Hermeneutic’s interpretive methodology can be seen to be very much of the world, of one’s life-world, and this research embraces the two main constituent aspect of my professional life-worlds, teaching and art practice.<sup>27</sup> In this respect, hermeneutics seemed to be the most flexible conceptual frame for researching within and making sense of the work. In the case of artistic research with its indistinct interrelationship between subject and object of research this approach proved productive. Gadamer’s hermenutics also offers a productive rationale for my use of sites, because site-specificity in my practice can be seen as

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23 Hannula, Souranta, and Vadén, *Artistic Research*, p. 67.

24 Ibid, p. 67.

25 For instance, the following theorists and pedagogues have in different ways facilitated this exploration: Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, hermeneutics and praxis*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983. Wilfred Carr, and Stephen Kemmis, *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*, Routhledge Falmer, 2006. Paolo Freire and Myra Bergman Ramos, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1972.

26 Mika Hannula, ‘The Responsibility and Freedom of Interpretation’ in Miles, Malcolm (ed.), *New Practices, New Pedagogies: A reader*, London: Routledge, 2005.

27 *Life-worlds* in phenomenology is the sum of our direct experiences and physical surroundings.

one of my prejudices (in Gadamer's sense, in that it has formed my thinking and understanding). Furthermore, by using site specificity as a theoretical grounding and undertaking specific constructions of discursive sites as a method, I am actively examining this prejudice through its application. The kind of site-specific work that is represented by this project, needs to operate reflexively in relation to the subject and object of study as well as the process of undertaking the research. Thus, within a hermeneutic interpretative research process I have singled out reflection and reflexion as both methods and as objects of study. Reflexivity avoids a reification of the various material generated through the research process, as this is counter to a reflective, reflexive approach.<sup>28</sup> Instead, the research matter is seen as different kinds of 'stuff', content that the research process has tried to make sense of, through forms of reflection within this hermeneutic interpretive framework. It is the process of this 'sense making' which this thesis attempts to articulate. The next section 1.4 will define and explore my use of reflection and reflexion in this thesis.

At the outset of this research, I set out to look at certain aspects of (my) art practice. I wanted to explore where knowledge is understood to reside in arts practice/arts research, and more specifically where knowledge can be seen to reside in my practice. These questions became my objectives for this site, and as such formed the basis for the methods used and defined the overall approach.

For this Practice Site, it is very important that the research can be undertaken in a way that does not uncritically accept the dominance of the word as it operates within most research (including art-based research), in terms of communicating data and contributions to knowledge. I was interested to see if or how, for instance, models of reflection within my arts practice can be developed towards an expanded notion of writing. Formally, in terms of the writing, this, Practice Site is stylistically diverse (see Case Study 1: A Painting), and relates to my individual experience. In artistic research, questions concerning whom one wants to write for and how one wants to write influence the whole research process. The text here is orientated towards not only the work, but the relationship between the text, the work and the reader/viewer.<sup>29</sup> The parts here that directly consider my own art practice look (sometimes very subtly) different to the others, as I have attempted to follow Katy MacLeod's conception of writing as revealing of a practice.<sup>30</sup> This is her third category of interrelationship between text and practice, the others being a)

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28 Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldböck, *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research*, London: SAGE, 2000, p. 281.

29 Hannula, Souranta and Vadén, *Artistic Research*.

30 Katy MacLeod, 'The functions of the written text in practice-based PhD submissions', *Working Papers in Art and Design 1*, 2000, <http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdes/research/papers/wpades/vol1/macleod2.html> (accessed 23.04.08).

positioning a practice and b) theorising a practice, both of which I am attempting in other parts of the thesis.<sup>31</sup> This section has broadly defined the methodology as interpretive, and the next section 1.4 will expand on the role of reflection within a broadly hermeneutic approach. The question of methods will be revisited for each site, to outline the methods used, and to critique the different approaches.

#### 1.4 Reflection

The way that reflection is often uncritically employed in teaching and learning provided an initial link between my practice and pedagogy (in particular, pedagogies concerned with reflective learning and teaching), even as it was immediately apparent that reflection was unlikely to be one and the same thing across the various sites of research. As mentioned at the start of this site, it was the use of reflection (particularly the use of reflective materials in my work) that sparked off a broader interest in reflection, as a) a pedagogic concept, b) a philosophical proposition, and c) as a way to make and interact with art works. As I began to investigate different notions of reflection the term seemed to be applicable to my teaching and very much to art research, though it emerged not as a single thing with one meaning or application. I had a sense that this could be significant, particularly for art students and art researchers who are often explicitly asked to reflect (on their practice) as part of assessment procedures; significant in the sense that some forms of reflection could be inappropriate, and even possibly detrimental to students' development.

As I began to review the literature relating to this term, I found that reflection indeed has a very strong and central association with contemporary teaching and learning theory.<sup>32</sup> In this context, the focus usually rests on its role in producing or eliciting knowledge, and the possibility or the desirability of communicating the reflective process undertaken by teachers who wish to become better teachers, to their students. I will look at some of the relevant teaching and learning literature later

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31 'What appeared to be happening in this type of research was that after the completion of one phase of the written text, when the seesaw was high in the air, the ensuing work on the art project would destabilise what had been achieved to the point that when the researcher returned to the next phase of research on the written text, the seesaw was firmly down on the ground and the text had to be completely reconceived; when the next phase of research on the written text was completed and the seesaw was high in the air, it was only to descend again when the work on the ensuing art project was underway. Thus, the written text was instrumental to the conception of the art projects but the art projects themselves exacted a radical rethinking of what had been constructed in written form because the process of realising or making artwork altered what had been defined in written form'. Katy MacLeod, 'The functions of the written text in practice-based PhD submissions'.

32 John Cowan, *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher: Reflection in action*, Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2006. Jennifer A. Moon, *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development*, RoutledgeFalmer, 2005. Anne Brookbank, and Ian McGill, *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, SRHE and Open University, 2007.

in Site 2: Teaching Practice. For arts-based research, I saw that critical reflection is often cited as that which separates arts research from art practice.<sup>33</sup> Within arts practice, however, it seemed that the role of reflection could be more literal, sometimes meaning simply the use of reflective materials.<sup>34</sup>

I am interested in ways that a term like reflection can be understood as emerging from particular discourses, particularly within the theory and practice of art. This is one area where my research interest seems to diverges from the majority of literature in teaching and learning, which does not consider reflection in subject-specific terms, as traced from and contextualised from specific points of origin (for instance philosophy).<sup>35</sup> Within the field of teaching and learning, reflection is generally not seen as subject-dependent. For example, Cowan states that the reader should ‘suspend disbelief on matters of disciplinary constraints’ — meaning that teachers should not see their field or discipline as being privileged.<sup>36</sup> Instead, reflective approaches to teaching and learning are seen as possible within any subject. In fact, reflection is promoted as being particularly useful in an interdisciplinary, generic approaches to teaching and learning.<sup>37</sup>

As a term, reflection has no agreed definition and its synonyms are manifold: reasoning, thinking, reviewing, problem solving, inquiry, judgment and criticism.<sup>38</sup> In section 1.4.2, I will consider reflection as articulated by key thinkers who have employed the concept as a part of their philosophical constructs, before looking at some of the significant ways that this term operates in relation to art practices. First I will attempt to expand on the definition of the terms reflection and reflexion as found in the introduction.

#### 1.4.1 Reflexion

In this thesis the term reflection is conceptualised and applied in different ways, linked to the concepts as defined by theorists, such as Dewey, Schön and Habermas, whose approaches have informed the application and use of reflection as a method throughout this research. In addition, there is the way reflection operates within art

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33 For instance, for the The National Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowships Programme, the written component of the submission is generally referred to as the ‘critical reflection’, [www.kunststipendiat.no](http://www.kunststipendiat.no), (accessed 15.11.10).

34 Examples include artist like Anish Kapoor, Dan Graham, and Monica Bonvicini. In 2004 Karina Daskalov curated an exhibition called ‘Reflecting the Mirror’ at Marian Goodman Gallery NY, which brought together a series of artworks which use reflection and mirroring either literally or metaphorically.

35 Such as Anne Brookbank and Ian McGill, John Cowan, and Jennifer Moon.

36 Cowan, *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher*.

37 Brookbank and McGill, *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*.

38 I have based this list on a similar inventory provided by Søren Kjølrup, on behalf of the Sensuous Knowledge 09 Conference Organisers: *Introduction to Reflection, Relevance, Responsibility*.

practice, which is also explored and forms of application attempted in the analysis of the Case Studies in section 1.5 and 1.6. Before the Case Studies I will look at the work of Dan Graham as well as at Foucault's writing on Velázquez' painting *Las Meninas*, in terms of art based-forms of reflection.

In as far as a more generic definition of reflection is appropriate for this thesis — it would be *critical reflection* — in the sense of questioning and analysing experiences, observations, theories, beliefs and assumptions, a definition in line with expectations for (practice-based) doctoral study.<sup>39</sup> However, I have to reiterate that it is precisely the way that the term reflection can be seen to have different and shifting meanings in different contexts which is at stake here. These can be articulated by tracing the origins back to the philosophical or other provenances, which gives it its meaning in each context. I think this is something that will have consequences for articulations around art practice, whether undertaken by artists, art researchers, students, theorist or others.

In addition to the shifting meanings of reflection, reflexion, as stated in the introduction is often being used both synonymously and interchangeably with the term. I will now describe how I have attempted to use it more specifically, as subtly distinct from reflection, even though this definition will be expanded later in the thesis. A preliminary definition of reflexion is necessary, in part, because I will be looking at the term as a potentially alternative process to reflection, that can perhaps be critical in a different way, (particularly when it comes to the relationship between art practice and teaching practice). Here I want to stress the two meanings of the term *critical*: judgment and evaluation, but also in the sense of *crucial*.<sup>40</sup> In this sense, I want to propose that reflexion is in the context of this research the critical and practical application of reflection.

I have chosen to frame the use of reflexion in relation to art practice, but must state that this interpretation is not exclusive or uncritically privileging art practice. Indeed I will also be considering reflexion in social science research terms.<sup>41</sup> 'What distinguishes art from informative language is that it not only describes or shows reality, but it can potentially describe how it describes'. In this quote from *An Inaudible Dialogue*, Tim O'Riley refers to the work of Kosuth and Art and Language and suggests that 'a reflexive artwork, a reflective practice that poses questions, a system that incorporates the relation between itself as a system and its environment into its processes', thus avoids a hierarchy or conflict between activities of making

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39 See UAL Research Degrees Handbook & Regulations 10th Edition, September 2011.

40 Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, Sixth Edition, 2007.

41 Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldböck, *Reflexive methodology*.

and reflecting.<sup>42</sup> This sense of reflexion seems particularly relevant to this research, with interesting potential towards teaching and learning in art.

#### 1.4.2 Reflection as a philosophical term

The philosophical interpretations of reflection can begin to untangle reflection both as a word and as a process. I will start with philosopher and educationalist John Dewey's concept of reflection as set out in *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process* (1933), and from this point to move onto Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1971) and finally, Donald Schön's, *The Reflective Practitioner* (1991).<sup>43</sup>

Jennifer Moon has stated in her useful introductory book on reflection, that Dewey and Habermas can be seen as 'the backbone philosophies of reflection', despite, or because of the different ways they describe reflection and its uses.<sup>44</sup> Dewey's use of reflection seems to be underlying the pedagogical notion of 'reflective practice'.<sup>45</sup> It also underscores much of the literature on reflection in general (from professional/personal development to artistic research). As an American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer, Dewey was one of the founders of the philosophical school of Pragmatism and is seen by many as one of the most influential thinkers on education of the 20th century. However, Dewey is certainly not the first to use the term reflection in relation to philosophical thinking or cognition. For instance, the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius has been described as a prototype of reflective practice.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, in 1748 Hume, distinguished between sensation as 'outward sentiment' and reflection as 'inward sentiment'.<sup>47</sup> Dewey, however, is arguably the first philosopher to fully examine the nature of reflection, the mechanisms by which it occurs, and its implications for learning. Dewey's notion of reflection operates as a sequence of linked ideas that aim towards a conclusion and is thus different to 'stream of consciousness' type of thought process, since it is inscribed with a purpose:

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42 Tim O'Riley, 'An inaudible dialogue'. Working Papers in Art and Design 4, 2006, [http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes\\_research/papers/wpades/vol4/torfull.html](http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol4/torfull.html), (accessed 22.12.11).

43 Dewey, *How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process*, Heath: Boston, Mass., 1933.

Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Boston: Beacon Press; 1971.

Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, Ashgate Publishing, 1991.

44 Moon, *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development*.

45 The term 'reflective practice' was coined by Donald Schön, as an alternative to what he sees as traditional epistemologies of practice. See Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*, p. 345.

46 Seamus Mac Suibhne, 'Wrestle to be the man philosophy wished to make you', Marcus Aurelius, reflective practitioner. *Reflective Practice* 10 (4), 2009 pp. 429–436.

47 David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Oxford World's Classics, OUP Oxford, 2008.



Reflection involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a consequence, a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each in turn leans back on its predecessors.<sup>48</sup>

The outcome of reflective thinking is important but more crucial for Dewey is the initiation of reflective thinking, which induces a state of uncertainty, difficulty or doubt. A main feature of reflection here is that it is linked to goals, has a direction, and with emphasis on direction, it can be seen to be linked to an idea of outcome. Dewey identifies five logically distinct steps:

i) a felt difficulty, ii) its location and definition, iii) suggestion of possible solution, iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; v) further observation and experience leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief and disbelief.<sup>49</sup>

Reflection was, for Dewey, a creative process that organises our thinking. He did not suggest that we have to follow a preset pattern slavishly, even if this may appear to be the case when, for instance, he writes 'the problem fixes the end of thought as the end controls the process of thinking'.<sup>50</sup> The setting up of stages, however, implies linear thinking in reflection, which we can find in both Habermas and Schön, and many others who have written on reflection.

Also important to note is that Dewey does not seem to present reflection as an inter-subjective or dialogical process. As Cinnamond and Zimpher observe, Dewey's work was grounded in the idea that the individual learns to reflect on a particular experience on their own.<sup>51</sup> In *How we think*, Dewey describes reflection as a solitary and individual process.<sup>52</sup>

Another important aspect of Dewey's ideas of reflection is the role of practice and action in the world, and his work can be seen to promote the idea of experiential

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48 Dewey, *How we think*, pp. 8-9.

49 Dewey, *How we think*, p. 72.

50 Ibid, p. 12.

51 Jeffrey H. Cinnamond and Nancy, L. Zimpher, 'Reflection as a Function of Community', In: *Encouraging Reflective Practice in Education, An Analysis of Issues and Programs*. Renee Tipton Clift, W. Robert Houston and Marleen Carol Pugach (eds.) Teachers College Press New York, 1990, pp. 58. Dewey conceived *How We Think* as a textbook for students undergoing teacher training. *How To Think* became a 'bible' for progressive educators in USA at the time, and its legacy is still strong today.

52 And it remains this way today in a great many of the reflective activities designed within the Higher Education Art Institution. This is especially true at BA level in fine art where the emphasis is usually on the individual student working alone on their individual art projects, particularly at points of assessment.

learning and experiential knowledge.<sup>53</sup> The idea of student-centred learning, which is prevalent in today's art schools, is linked to the idea of experiential learning — with the additional requirement that it is the individual student's practice that sets the agenda for what he/she learns and when/how it is learnt. This means that students tend to have these experiential encounters in learning in isolation, since while they may be in a shared studio, even working closely side by side, their (experiential) learning is seldom shared, since it relates to their private practice.

So we can see how when we consider the educational/pedagogic literature, Dewey's primary influence has been to offer a model of individual development. By contrast, Habermas has had a marked influence on critical pedagogy, and on other pedagogical research methods like Action Research.<sup>54</sup> In other words, his impact can be seen in practices that are contingent on interactions between groups of subjects. Nevertheless Habermas' philosophy is influenced by Pragmatism, and Dewey's influence can be seen in relation to his ideas around liberal democracy, politics and the public, but more specifically in relation to his definition of reflection.<sup>55</sup> After Habermas, theorists who have written on reflection have done so from either his position or Dewey's, in other words, from an experiential position, concerned with direct, often physically-based experience, or a socio-political position, where a collective reflection can lead to emancipation from a current 'frame' or mode of being.

For Habermas, what he calls *knowledge constituent interests* are the three cognitive areas in which human interest generate knowledge. He calls these 'knowledge constitutive', as they determine the mode of discovering knowledge and whether a knowledge-claim can be warranted. The three 'generic' knowledge constituent interests that Habermas sets up relate to different parts of social existence: work, interaction and power. Work-knowledge is based upon empirical investigation and will be governed by technical rules. Much of so-called scientific research falls into this category. Practical-knowledge relates to social interaction or 'communicative action', and involves hermeneutic methods of interpretation and can be seen

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53 Experiential knowledge is, broadly speaking, knowledge gained through direct experience. Kolb popularized the notion of experiential learning. See Kolb's learning cycle as defined in David A. Kolb and Roger Fry, 1975 'Toward an applied theory of experiential learning', in C. Cooper (ed.) *Theories of Group Process*, London: John Wiley, 1975.

54 The term 'Critical pedagogy' was coined by Paulo Freire in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Harmondsworth, 1972. Here he explores dialogue and its potential possibilities towards liberatory practice in education. Action Research is a research method through which individuals can work together to attain some form of emancipation from a system (like the university) that they are part of. Although action research as a method predates Habermas' critical reflection, he has had a significant influence on the further development of Action Research, see Section 2.1.3 of this thesis.

55 Lewis, E Hahn (ed), *Perspectives on Habermas*, Chicago: Open court, 2000. Moon, *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development*.



as intersubjective. History, aesthetics, social science, law, operate within this category.<sup>56</sup> Emancipatory-knowledge identifies self-reflection as the way to obtain knowledge through a process of emancipation. Psychoanalysis and feminist theory are set out as areas where this becomes possible. The critical theory of the Frankfurt school, however, is proposed as the main method for this third form of knowledge production.<sup>57</sup>

For Habermas, reflection is thus primarily a tool used in the development of particular forms of knowledge. Which, he claims, can have an emancipatory function for certain social groups via critical or evaluative modes of thought and enquiry. Towards a better understanding of the self, the human condition and ultimately the self within the human condition. Here reflection is framed within a broader social context and crucially it also holds a promise of collective action.<sup>58</sup> As such, its outcome becomes built into the theory itself, it becomes *reflexive*. This is a new significant conceptual extension of the concepts of reflection. This aspect of Habermas' critical theory has influenced social science methods, for instance, with the impact of reflexive methodology.<sup>59</sup> Reflection, according to Habermas, represents a shift from a process undertaken by a solitary learner towards a more politically informed group process where interactions between agents in the group promotes collective self-awareness that could lead to a change in existing social systems.

Notwithstanding the foundational contributions of Dewey and Habermas, Donald Schön's concept of reflection is currently the most widely applied and often referred to in teaching and learning literature, specifically in relation to art and design. Significantly, he can be seen as central to our understanding of reflection in terms of art research. However, Schön originally developed his theories of reflection together with Chris Argyris, a business management theorist from Harvard, who was particularly interested in generating knowledge that is useful towards solving practical problems.<sup>60</sup>

Schön's *The Reflective Practitioner* addresses concepts of reflection within professional practice and as such is aimed at educators of professions like architecture, engineering, management etc.. Nevertheless, this text, and *Educating*

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56 And this is the knowledge constitutive interest that this research commenced from.

57 Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*.

58 The critical theory of the Frankfurt school can in itself be defined as reflective, as it reflects on the social context from which it emerges, its function within that society and on the purposes and agendas of those involved.

59 Alvesson and Skoldberg, *Reflexive methodology*.

60 Cris Argyris and Donald A. Schön, *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1974.

*the Reflective Practitioner*, have had a considerable impact on art and design discourse exploring and explaining forms of experiential learning, but also in ways of understanding research and knowing/knowledge within art and design.<sup>61</sup> Schön's impact on these fields is so considerable that it is difficult to discuss art and design education and research today without in some way engaging with his theories on reflective practice.

Schön's major contribution to ideas of reflection is the notion of *reflection-in-action*.<sup>62</sup> His other influential concept, *reflection-on-action* is more aligned with the common-sense use of the term, but also in its usage in experiential learning models as described by Kolb.<sup>63</sup> Both of these concepts, often coupled together, are central to pedagogies promoting 'reflective learning', such as that of Cowan, Brookbank and McGill.

Schön's work seems to be relevant for many fields, from nursing to art and design. His theory legitimates practice as a way of knowing, which is often missing in other epistemologies, as a means of escaping technical rationality, to use the Habermasian term for scientific paradigms of professional knowledge, that we saw previously. The issue of legitimating ways of knowing seems to be key, since some professions are seen as 'lacking' as producers of knowledge, because they do not fit a scientific epistemology. Thus, Schön does not set out to alter the scientific model of explanation, rather, his theories offer a way for knowledge (in professional practices, including art and design) to be communicated. It is, in a sense, a pretty radical bridging endeavour from one (epistemological) practice to another.

Both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action have been adopted by art researchers as methods. Reflection-on-action refers to that which underlies many of the reflective processes that art school students at all levels (including PhD) are asked to undertake. In practice-based art research the possibility of forms of reflection occurring through practice (reflection-in-action) is seen as, perhaps, a defining aspect of material-based arts practice, but which also requires some form of reflection after the event (reflection-on-action) as an appropriate way to develop ideas and questions around the practice. Together they can be seen to provide a useful and productive model for research in art, from art student to art researcher.

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61 Schön, it can be argued, does talk about design through his exploration of architecture and the teaching of architecture. Donald A. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner Towards a New Design for teaching and Learning in the Professions*, Jossey-Bass; 1987.

62 Moon, *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development*.

63 See Kolb and Fry, 'Toward an applied theory of experiential learning'. Here they represented the experiential learning circle that involves (1) concrete experience followed by (2) reflective observation and experience followed by (3) forming abstract concepts followed by (4) testing in new situations.

Reflection in/on action is also generally based on the idea of a singular student/practitioner engaging with their own practice and reflecting on their (learning/research) process, in a similar way to Dewey's notion of reflection. Dewey and Schön's models are effective for learning or research outcomes which can or should be in some way assessed or evaluated, (and which can thus potentially be instrumentalised by an education/research institution). This is particularly true when the required reflection-on-action has to be delivered in the form of a written articulation, which in the case of art practice is generally not in the manner or the medium of the practice itself.

Although Schön's work builds on Dewey, there is a Habermasian aspect to his work in that Schön's reflective practitioner can reflect on the frame, (meaning one's construction of reality), which could then lead to a change in the frame itself. Schön never refers to Habermas in the works discussed here, but it is an aspect that has been explored by others following this line of enquiry.<sup>64</sup>

Dewey, Habermas and Schön do not distinguish between reflection and *critical reflection*. Despite their differences, the forms of reflection they all propose can be seen as critical in that there are stages of thought, rigorous processes, engagement, evaluation and judgement. For the remainder of this thesis, Dewey, Habermas and Schön's ideas about reflection as a theoretically informed, critical activity will be kept in mind. Their different understandings and uses of reflection will be the counterpoint to the ways we can access and assess the forms of criticality that emerge from different forms of reflective art-based practices and also for modes of criticality that perhaps have a different root than Dewey, Habermas and Schön's philosophies.

#### 1.4.3 Reflection/reflexion in art practice

Separating philosophical and art-based reflection creates a dichotomy which is perhaps not indicative of the actual relationships between models of reflective cognition. Philosophers have often drawn on artistic methods of reflection, citing examples of art and artistic creativity. For instance Dewey, was inspired by and involved with fine art practices, which he explored in *Art as Experience*, his major work on aesthetics. Likewise, Michel Foucault, in *The Order of Things* analyses what he sees as a reflexive schema of mise-en-abyme in *Las Meninas* by Velázquez. The concept of mise-en-abyme was introduced by André Gide to account for art that

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64 However Schön does use the term technical rationality in both Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*, and Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*.

in some way remains endlessly open and self-reflexive.<sup>65</sup> The term has no proper English translation, literally it means ‘placed into abyss’. Perhaps undertaken through art, reflection can be usefully discussed as reflexive, even when this work does not first and foremost deal with meta-narration, which is the aspect that drew Gide to *mise-en-abyme*. This proposition can be coupled with O’Riley’s proposal regarding the work of Kosuth and *Art and Language* where the reflexive artwork is a system incorporating the relation between itself as a communicative system. However, here there is a greater emphasis on the *environment* of the work, and an interest in the potential conflict between activities of making and reflecting.<sup>66</sup> Thus reflexion, even when we restate its meaning to related terms or concepts, cannot be understood as one kind of phenomenon. The key thing is to keep reflection and reflexion operationally separate, as far as possible, to act as a device for defining the potential of reflection and reflexion in art and their consequences for artist and art educators.<sup>67</sup>

For instance, Dan Graham’s use of two-way mirrors in his pavilion pieces enable him to set up a dialogue between that which is reflective and that which is transparent. As Graham asserts, *Pavilion Sculpture for Argonne*, ‘is literally reflective of its environment’, but in addition to reflecting the sun, clouds, trees, buildings and the audience, the pavilion form suggests imbrications between sculpture and architecture, decoration, utility and social order.<sup>68</sup> ‘There is an ambiguity as to whether the art it displays is in an exhibition space or is outside and still part of “Nature”’.<sup>69</sup> This work seems to operate a sliding scale of reflexivity.

Dan Graham’s art practice was not conceived of as research (in the sense of academic practice-based research). However, the work proposes and explores a number of key issues fundamental to contemporary artistic practices in terms of authorship, site, subjectivity, utility, and relations to other cultural forms: here referencing, but not restricted to architecture. Thus it asks key questions about the role of and potential for art. The example of Dan Graham’s mirror pavilions is an accurate description of the reflective processes embedded into or coming out of art works, where reflexivity is in and of the world through the work, and not just a construct of the artist’s own judgements. Reflection of light in Graham’s work operates to construct a reflexive dialogue between the work, the artist, the site

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65 According to Lucien Dallenbach in *Mirror in the Text*, University of Chicago Press, 1989, André Gide first wrote about *mise-en-abyme* in his journal in 1893 to describe a form of self-reflexive embedding within an art work. In art history it has generally become to mean a technique where an image contains a smaller copy of itself, recurring infinitely.

66 O’Riley, ‘An inaudible dialogue’.

67 Alvesson and Sköldborg, *Reflexive methodology*.

68 Dan Graham, *Two way mirror power*, Alexander Alberro, (ed), Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999, p. 163.

69 Ibid, p. 164.

and the viewer. Going beyond the more embedded reflexive strategy of mise-en-abyme, in a sense the art work relates to itself as a system, whilst reflexively referring to other systems, thus setting up reflection on several levels directed at several themes at the same time, as Alvensson and Sköldberg puts it.<sup>70</sup>

Thus we see reflexivity operating as an established aesthetic strategy in art, as well as something we can recognise as a potential method towards research — a reflexive form of art research which explores its own form and content, within itself and in a dialogical relationship with the audience and context. This creates complex and sometimes even bewildering relationships between processes which feed back on themselves in critical reflection that engages with discourses, each bound by their own habitual codes and conventions. This mode of reflexivity draws our attention to the arbitrariness of these conventions.<sup>71</sup> Open interpretation is key to engaging with this kind of work, and thus rigour has to be applied by the viewer/reader as much as by the artist/researcher. The notion of site can be introduced here as a productive framing device for reflexive artistic reflection. Both in a physical sense, for instance as seen in Dan Graham's pavilions, but also institutionally, for instance in relation to art institutions and finally in a larger discursive sense where the artist researcher sets up a site *through* reflexion. Art research can thus be understood as a very particular site, a site constantly under construction and revision through forms of reflection.



Image 2. Sculpture/Pavilion for Argonne (1978-81) at Argonne



Image 3. Karlsruhe / Dan Graham / Pavilion Sculpture for Argonne (large model)

The next section is my first 'case study', an exploration of forms of reflection that can be seen to take place during (a creative and practical process of) making an art work. Following this case study, I will endeavour to speculate on the forms of knowledge that emerge or evolve from the reflective processes.

<sup>70</sup> Alvensson and Sköldberg, *Reflexive methodology*, p. 5.

<sup>71</sup> Ann-Sophie Lehmann, *Reflexivity as a Theoretical concept in Media Studies*, 2008, <http://mediaengager.com/tutorial1.pdf>, (accessed 15.06.10).

### 1.5 Case Study I: A painting

The writing of this case study tried to reflect the process of research by using the form or style of writing as content. It is written in dialogic form, as a conversation between myself and the work itself, a process which seemed like the most productive structure for 'capturing' a process of this kind. This conversational writing process can be seen as an attempt to employ writing that is generative as well as descriptive of things. Katy MacLeod, calls this latter mode of writing *revealing*, as it attempts to reveal the integral relationship between experience and thought, the research and the thesis.<sup>72</sup> This case study takes as its subject work that is related previous practice, prior to commencing the PhD. It is necessary to include this work as it can be seen as a link between the PhD research and the development of my practice over 15 years. As such, it is indicative of the practice that informed my teaching before the commencement of this doctoral programme.

The conversation that follows is between the work (W), the researcher/artist (R), and a narrator (N) who introduces and comments on the dialogue. This is an attempt to determine and test what we can call reflection within an art process, but it also serves to elucidate, or more specifically, identify the *knowing* that takes place in the art process. The font is different to illustrate the difference between this part of the writing and the rest.

#### 1.5.1 A conversation

N: R has received an invitation to participate in a group exhibition from the curator/artist Clare Price, based on the curator's knowledge of the previous work and the practice of the artist. There is thus an expectation of a certain kind of practice and work for this event, a painting exhibition, in the sense of painting within an expanded field.

R: This invitation has come out of the blue, it does not fit in to my programme of work as such — but as my whole working process is becoming increasingly reflexive let me see how this project can contribute and we will see what this kind of process may reveal or conceal. Also, as the invitation is linked to previous work, it could also be a way to draw some links between past and present.

W: Although, as yet, I exist only as potentiality, I am already leaning

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<sup>72</sup> Katy MacLeod, 'The functions of the written text in practice-based PhD submissions' *Working Papers in Art and Design* 1, 2000, <http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdes/research/papers/wpades/vol1/macleod2.html>, (accessed 20.04.08).



heavily on your past works, as well as the occasion, the site, and because of the research you are undertaking, ideas around research as practice.

R: The curator has asked me to make work that responds to the exhibition. Most of the other works are already selected so she wishes for a response to this curatorial position, the gallery space as well as the ideas and concept behind the endeavour. This interests me also, so the first step is to talk about the exhibition further with the curator and to visit and photograph the gallery.

N: A hot day in south London: The gallery is in an impressive Georgian house beautifully restored. The walls are painted in keeping with the heritage of the building, not brilliant white but shades of white by Farrow and Ball, (the dado rails, doors etc. are in a darker shade).<sup>73</sup> The gallery is far from a white cube and the architecture of the house is inescapable.

W: Presumptions based on our previous practice make it immediately clear that I will need to absorb the architecture in some way and relate to the space formally as well as historically and conceptually, and let's not forget my compatriots; this exhibition will be full of paintings. As such, the exhibition is trying to do something and say something. We are all going into dialogue with the space as well as with each other. This is interesting. What am I doing in this space as a work? What is my work?

R: Good question. In addition, I will also co-opt you and use you towards my research, I will make you work twice as hard.

W: Yes, but first we must find out what my work here is.

R: Right — first thing's first. I will look at that in relation to the exhibition first and foremost and then we shall see what other work we can claim for you, through you and on your behalf.

W: That does not sound like a very rigorous method, I thought research would need a more prescribed approach? I am up for this, though, because at least it makes me feel that I have a

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<sup>73</sup> Farrow and Ball is a British company who manufacture and sell paints based on or inspired by a historic palette. See, [www.farrow-ball.com](http://www.farrow-ball.com), (accessed 11.11.11).

purpose, the purpose that I am primarily interested in, the purpose of doing my work as a work of art.

R: Yes, whatever that might mean. But let us get to work. You will be wall-based in keeping with the traditions of painting. You will be small. This is to do with issues of space and organisation — but it suits me at this time to try and see how you can be architectural, yet small. Can I make you do that? So many works here are competing for attention and are heavily reliant on colour, brush marks, edgy energy — after all the title of the exhibition is Blitzkrieg Bop — quite punky. You need to be different, yet drawing on the energy created by the interaction with the elements of the site.

W: I do not want to be insignificant and disappear within the space. I want to have a presence and to engage with the space, the works and most importantly, the viewer. As an art work I am not sure I can be seen to have an ego, but I want to stand up and be counted.

R: Yes I understand that. But let us not forget Gaston Bachelard, who suggested, that that, which is very small has the same potential to command attention as that which is very big.<sup>74</sup> So by making you small and discreet — you may actually be more commanding for it.

W: OK — but what will I be, what is my form and how will you make me?

R: Yes, and in addition to those questions we still have to ask why?

N: Researcher goes to her studio, and starts to think about what she wants to do. Meanwhile, she has to go through the confirmation process for her PhD which means that she spends most of her time writing whilst looking at some images of the gallery and having regular email contact with the curator, who is keen to receive some indication of what the work will be as she wants an image for the exhibition catalogue.

R: Let us briefly return to the claims made for site-specificity made

74 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Boston; Beacon Press, Trans. Maria Jolas, 1994. Chapter 7 'Miniature'.



earlier in the PhD thesis. It may be useful to consider the possibility that painting can also be discussed through site-specificity. As we know, the term site-specific was firstly coined for practices, particularly sculpture and installation that attempted to engage with a particular place and space. Paintings have mostly not been discussed in these terms. Through pointing to and engaging with various conditions within a given site, can I make you as something to be understood as being site-specific? Using Miwon Kwon's genealogy of site-specificity as a framework, you might firstly attempt to engage with the site phenomenologically; Kwon's first category is site as an actual, physical location.<sup>75</sup>

Kwon's second category of site specificity is site as a 'cultural framework', defined by the institutions of art. In the past, I have aimed to make you work with site as a cultural framework defined by the institutions of art, but not as a form of institutional critique in the mould of Andrea Fraser or Hans Haacke, but to enable a particular understanding of the social/historical/political environment of the viewing subject.<sup>76</sup>

Kwon's final category of site specificity is difficult to grasp: site as a mobile discursive narrative; a functional site — as opposed to a literal site. Kwon explains this further by saying that a functional site is structured inter-textually rather than spatially. The moniker of a functional site was not hers, she is leaning on James Meyer here and his classification of a functional site as somewhere where the work is emplaced.<sup>77</sup> Kwon did, however, build productively on the discursive realm of this kind of site, which these days may not, in fact, incorporate any physical space. Site can in this way be defined as moving across much broader discursively-based fields. Despite your involvement with (actual) sites, you have also operated as a functional site through your reference to site specificity, but also through your referencing the practice of painting. Both site-specific practice and painting practice, it can be argued, have now become discursive sites in themselves, within contemporary arts practice

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<sup>75</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another*.

<sup>76</sup> See Maria Lind's four waves of institutional critique in, 'When Water is Gushing In "I Can't Work Like This"', *Printed Project Issue 6*, Anton Vidokle and Tirdad Zolghadr, (eds.), Published by VAI:Dublin, 2006.

<sup>77</sup> Meyer, 'The Functional Site', p. 27.

In this way the paintings in a site and the sites operating within a painting are layered, but not merged, in terms of their interrelationship. The interrelations can question each other as well as challenge the conditions the painting attempts to reactivate within the site of engagement. The painting's relationship to site, space and social matrix are thus irreducible to each other. The painting then can be said to 'work' through the interaction of parts: the actual space (architecture) and the site (the phenomenological, the institutional), the history and practice of painting and, crucially, the viewer.

R: The work begins on what will become *Collection 1*, but which has, as yet, no name. Some very pragmatic decisions are taken in tandem with some much more conceptual concerns. A long standing desire to make the work permeable (to have direct interaction between a work and the wall space behind) has taken me to the possibilities of using laser cutting, instead of scalpel or fretsaw which I would normally use. This leads me to a pertinent point. It was from that moment not possible to divorce the architecture of the gallery from the content of this particular exhibition. Already, before it has happened the space is permeated by all the ideas of the exhibition; my knowledge of particular works that will be there; and by knowledge of past exhibitions in the space. The architecture does not exist as a neutral entity, and this fact is just as true for the painting.

W: Size is not insignificant, but seems less relevant than perhaps other aspects. I am thinking of the form, how I am to be formed.

R: There were two kind of discursive sites that particularly interested me in for this exhibition. The first was the site of the practice of painting and the other was the site of this exhibition. What does a painting exhibition mean today? I have an ongoing fascination for museums and collections, and this resonates with an interest in curation and the meaning making that goes on through the gathering and juxtapositioning of specific art works to construct a coherent whole. In this exhibition there would be some very well

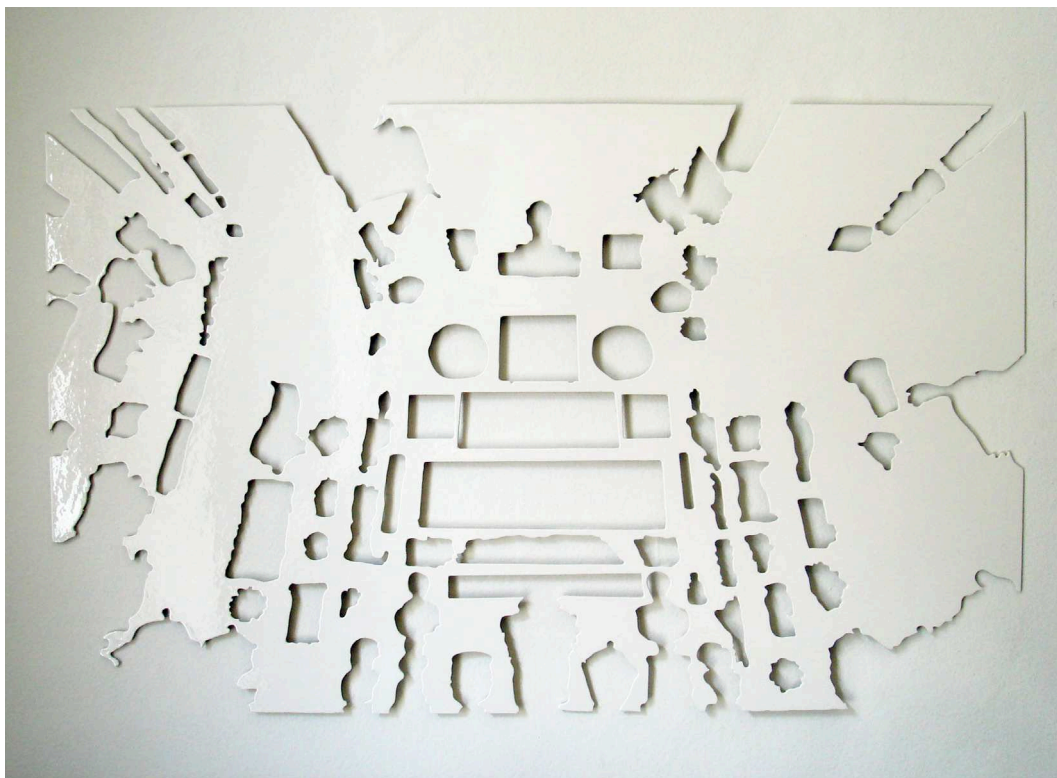


Image 4. *Collection 1*, 2008, *Blitzkrieg Bop*, Man and Eve Gallery, Photo: Clare Price.

known artists like Gillian Ayre and Ian Davenport.<sup>78</sup> Some dead, mostly alive — but belonging to different generations. Could this exhibition have didactic potential? Should it have?

W: That is all very interesting, but where does this leave me, what is my work and how am I going to do this work.

R: Your work is to be of the space but to offer up another space. More than one space in actual fact, the space that you occupy, will depict, and the discursive sites that are associated with these. In addition, you will need to look good, be well crafted and convey a quiet sense of purposefulness.

W: No pressure there then. How can I do this?

R: We will get to that in a moment. But let's talk about the space that you represent. I was thinking of turning to the Sir John Soane's Collection. Although I have never used the collection before, Soane's work is something that I go back to time and again, like the Dulwich Gallery, and his designs for various mausoleums. I will not be allowed to photograph the space for copyright issues, (this is often a problem for me) but will need to rely on found images. This is not always ideal. However, I think that involving someone else's selections in this process is very interesting. Someone else has decided the best angle to photograph and they have their reasons for this — which is sometimes clear — but often not. So the space is found, the image of the space is found, these different elements represent different facets of information, and knowledge even, which become subsumed into the process and the work.

W: Really! This is news to me! However, this laser cutting business, will you need to acquire some new skills to do this kind of thing?

R: Yes. Using Adobe Illustrator, I have to save the image file in a cross-platform format, readable by the laser cutter. I had decided to use birch ply since I know well how this material behaves when

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<sup>78</sup> The exhibition *Blitzkrieg Bop* at Man & Eve gallery ran from 4th July until 3rd August 2008, and included the following artists: Gillian Ayres, Simon Bill, Melanie Carvalho, Clem Crosby, Ian Davenport, Howard Dyke, Sophie Eade, Russell Eade, Katrine Hjelde, JohnFrumPress, Neil Kilby, Scott King, Peter Lanyon, Rich Littler, Yo Okada, Daniel Pasteiner, Clare Price, Ben Sansbury, Peter Saville.

it is painted with alkyd-based oil paints and I am confident about it working. I was unsure about the thickness of the ply, although I knew I wanted it to be thin but stable. In the end I had two pieces cut, 1.5 mm and 3 mm. I really liked the 1.5 mm but was worried that it would be too difficult to install and thus decided to use the 3 mm ply version for the exhibition. And then there was the act of painting the work. Undercoating it first and then applying many, many thin layers of Farrow and Ball Shaded White full gloss paint. Very reflective paint, but due to its light colour it works less like a mirror and more like a reflector.

W: So there I am – fully formed!

R: No – you are forgetting the crucial element. The installation. As a work you are incomplete outside of the gallery space. Only when you are there are you the work. Now you are a kind of proposal for the work (and later you can be a record of the work), and perhaps a rather nice object, but you are not yet (or no longer) the work.

W: So this is my fate, to become or to have been the work. Why have I no autonomy? I thought that despite post modernism, autonomy can still be an applicable claim for paintings? Or am I not really a painting either despite being in a painting exhibition and painted with paint?

R: This is the question. What are you? Where is your work, what is your work and what are the knowledge(s) that have been embedded through the process of emplacing you in an exhibition. What is the knowledge that can be communicated to a viewer? What can I, the researcher extract from you retrospectively and communicate to others – to a research community? What are the forms of knowledge that can be claimed? Can these at any point be meaningfully communicated to students?

N: The exhibition opens, there is a great turn out for the private view on a lovely summer evening. The Researcher feels relieved upon seeing the work in the context of the rest of the exhibition where she feels it holds its own. Feedback from visitors, friends and colleagues is positive. A quiet day a week later she goes back to the exhibition to make sure the work is fine and to continue

the dialogue.

R: Hello — looks like you have settled in well? Hope you are not too overwhelmed for a further conversation?

W: Speak for yourself! I am well settled even as I exist in a permanent state of frisson through the installation. I am right next to a painting by Ian Davenport, which, with its colourful, abstract form, activates my more monochrome figuration nicely. I feel I am being in held in tension — or in tensions to be more accurate.

R: Perhaps, in that case I am more interested in the tension with the space. Now that you have been up for a while I think we need to try and interpret you within this space, which may include a nod to your neighbour(s). Can interpretation in situ tell us more about representation as a form of knowledge?

W: A site-specific interpretation?

R: Well — perhaps we could call it that as we have determined you as a site-specific piece. More specifically, we can see if we can more purposefully understand you in terms of knowledge.

W: I think that I do some work as I represent or imply a window between two galleries, between the Sir John Soane Museum and this commercial gallery space. As a window or 'in-between' entity I can offer something towards the understanding of either of those spaces, as well as show my role as an artwork in this process.

R: Can you say what you think this understanding is? It certainly does seem too propositional to operate as justified true belief, as Plato famously defined knowledge. But then I think this definition of knowledge is narrow, and one that does not sit that well with some ideas around reflection. Bear with me, I can feel that I might be going off on a tangent — but that may be necessary as part of a reflective interpretive process.

W: Or it could be that you have a problem getting to the point?

R: Scrivener has stated that art does not embody a form of knowledge but (with Chapman) he goes on to say, 'However,

there is an argument for suggesting that the fact of the artwork is itself knowledge: an existence proof that something is possible'.<sup>79</sup> I am tempted to extrapolate from this and suggest that the kind of knowledge that interest me here is one that seems to occur in-between, through juxtaposition. Building on another of Scrivener's notions — apprehension, which he uses to say that when an art work is grasped it offers novel ways of seeing, for me means more than what he proposes. This apprehension leads to understanding, which may be different for everyone, but something seems to have shifted.

W: I feel this is getting out of hand — as the object that may or may not embody knowledge (and I would personally like to think that I do!) I still have no idea if you think that I do and if so if anything from my existence in the world can be usefully transferred into a teaching situation.

R: We shall finish this discussion around knowledge which we cannot resolve in relation to your being. Lets entertain the notion that Scrivener may be right with regards to new knowledge. He makes a very convincing case that artworks do on the whole not embody knowledge in the strict research-based terms that surround the language of institutionalised art research. He makes this claim it seems to me, to safe-guard art from having to conform to notions of knowledge verification which have emerged out of different (non-art) disciplines and which may on some level be anathema to art practice. I don't need to claim a new knowledge for you — but I need to try and understand how your being in the world has had an impact on the knowledge or knowledges that I (can) bring into the teaching. If we look towards a more pedagogic idea of knowledge this may shift a little? Other notions of knowledge, than new knowledge, may be more relevant in terms of knowledge transfer in the teaching learning encounter, however this again raises issues around the relationship between research and teaching in the FA institution.

W: I think that you may need to come back to this question, since going around in circles surely cannot be endlessly defended as

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79 Stephen Scrivener and Peter Chapman, 'The practical implications of applying a theory of practice based research: a case study', *Working Papers in Art and Design* 3, 2004, [http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes\\_research/papers/wpadesvol3/ssfull.html](http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpadesvol3/ssfull.html) (accessed 24.01.12).

some kind of ongoing hermeneutic circle.

R: Yes, lets move out of this dialogue and follow up on some of the questions raised through our conversation in the rest of the writing in this Site.

N: And so the discussion ends, here. The researcher briefly considered writing her entire thesis as a dialogue as she got quite interested in this form as a way to embed *mise-en-scene* into the thesis itself, but she came to her senses realising that she is no André Gide, thus this section would suffice as an attempt to integrate the work and the reflection on the work in this thesis.

The case study conversation captures some of the uncertainty and doubt which characterised the process of making a work. There is a Dewey like purposiveness to this form of reflection, a desire for a resolution, a resolution which will be an outcome — an art work. Here we recognise some of Dewey's 'stages' of a reflective process. The capturing of this process through the form of a conversation is at once revealing of, and at odds with this process. The artistic process (or at least the process recollected here) is not linear in the way the conversation suggests. Furthermore, its temporality is different: many important decisions suddenly fell into place, and at the same time other decisions are never really made, but suspended in anticipation, hoping for moment of decision. Even though, on the one hand, I made the work and all the decisions were up to me, on the other hand the decisions and processes were contingent on relations with the curator, the gallerist, with the space, and with the work of other artists. Thinking of Schön and reflection-in-action, neither the work nor the conversation can be said to capture this process in a communicable way; the work, however, does embody aspects of reflecting-in-action, in that it is an embodied outcome of both the reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The latter, however, can also be found here in the dialogue. The reflection-on-action with regards to a piece like this, is thus dispersed across the work. It is multilayered, not linear either in time or place.

Reflection within an art process such as this is thus seemingly not a single method, but a number of linked, sometimes even competing, ways to allow a process of mirroring, evidencing and refracting between thinking and working on something. The art work can also be said to be a reflection in itself, if we think of it as embodying all the processes that have led to its completion. In summary, the above conversation can be seen as an attempt at a reflective dialogue between writing about the work and the work itself, an attempt that perhaps tells us more about what artistic reflection is not, than what it is.



### 1.6 Case study 2: A collaboration

Prior to embarking on this research, I had a clear sense of what my practice was. I would describe it as a 'material' art practice concerned with the relationship between art and its context and in exploring the literal and metaphorical space between the spectator, the space and the artwork. I have had several one-person exhibitions and have taken part in numerous curated international group exhibitions. I have also successfully applied for art grants, from organisations like the London Arts Board, because my work, being often very large scale, required financial and practical support for its realisation. In 2000, I entered into an ongoing collaboration with the Oslo-based architects, b+r architects, and together we have secured prizes in public art competitions, including that of a Holocaust Museum in Oslo, which opened in 2006.<sup>80</sup>

As mentioned earlier, I anticipated that my practice-based PhD would require me to make the kind of work that I was already doing, but that it could now become instrumentalised for the purpose of research. This instrumentalisation of my art made me anxious. As the teaching and research unfolded, it quickly became clear that the research process was also (at least for me) a process of agitating my



Image 5. *Future Reflections: Future Reiterations*, Installation for the 'Art of Research - Research Narratives', 2008. Photo: Marsha Bradfield.

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<sup>80</sup> See page 32 for image of this work and [www.katrinehjelde.net](http://www.katrinehjelde.net) for further information.

practice, a reconsideration of what my practice is for me, where it resides and, of course, how it thus enters or could enter into teaching. The research process has in this way led to a reconfiguration of practice on my part, including what I take it to be and mean.

The collaboration described below was initially undertaken as a one-off research student activity. Working together then led to the formation of an ongoing research group, active for the remainder of my PhD research. The work we did in this group was instrumental in shifting and expanding my practice, and also in reframing aspects of my existing practice.<sup>81</sup>

### 1.6.1 Future Reflections Research Group

Future Reflections research group (FR), was formed by Marsha Bradfield, Catherine Maffioletti, Aaron McPeake and myself.<sup>82</sup> As Fine Art practice-based PhD students at Chelsea College of Art and Design, we wanted to play with ways of undertaking an integrated form of *reflection-through-practice* and to make this process visible and transparent through the various art forms by which our collaborative practice was disseminated to 'a public'. As a group, we went on to undertake collective and site-specific research into art research itself. We did this work *through* some of the 'structural sites' of art research, such as conferences and publications, where the genre of art research becomes public. We used performative strategies towards interaction with this field, as a self-conscious reflexive method. This approach enabled us to both explore and play with the protocols of these particular institutional and discursive sites. We did this work through performative conference presentations and written outputs published in art-research publications.<sup>83</sup> Our website archives all the different FR outputs and I have included two of our papers in the appendix to this thesis, as these are referred to here.

Our contribution to art research as Future Reflection Research Group does not propose a new method or way for (art) research to be conducted, but rather, it sought to expand the possibilities for art research, arguing against falling back onto an established epistemologically science-based discourse. Instead, the groups aim was to expand a repertoire of literacies towards creating, reading and otherwise examining the research process. The outcomes that I will discuss within

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81 Chelsea had funding and resources to encourage 1st year students to organise a research related event, exhibition, symposium or similar. Future Reflections was a three-part project that took place in the Triangle Gallery, Chelsea College of Art and Design between the 18th-20th, of April, 2007. It included an exhibition, a publication and a two-day conference focusing on the interplay between research and reflection at different stages in the art-making process.

82 Aaron McPeake was only involved in the inaugural project as he had to withdraw shortly after due to other commitments.

83 See, [www.futurereflections.org.uk](http://www.futurereflections.org.uk), (accessed 22.11.10).

this case study are amongst the first that we produced as Future Reflection, after our inaugural event at Chelsea. Those include written and performed works that were made for, and after, the *Art of Research* Conference in Helsinki, 2007, as a way to discuss the problems of our performative site-specific approach but also to explore its potential (both for art and possibly other research domains). I have chosen this work as a case study because it was through these projects, associated processes and outcomes, that Future Reflections developed a way of working, where reflexive reflection on past and present work self-consciously envisaged new work. It is also here that processes of working and, in retrospect, collective reflexion can be first identified as key for the project described in the final section of this thesis, Site 3: Praxis Site.

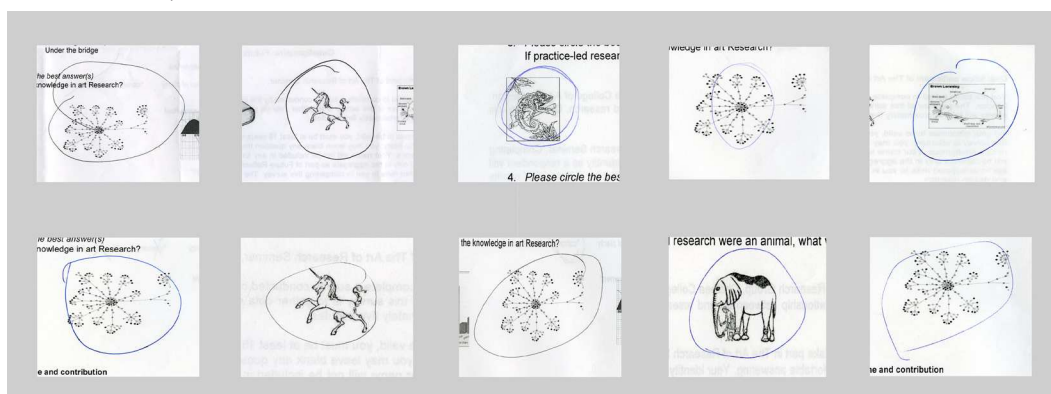


Fig. 2. From Future Reflection surveys sent to conference delegates.

For the Helsinki *Art of Research* project, FR wrote a paper called *Future Response: Is the Question the Answer?* as an initial response to a Call for Papers (CFP).<sup>84</sup> This paper was structured around four questions: 1) *What are the key positions on art Research?* 2) *What are the languages of the art Thesis?* 3) *When is art R/ research?* and 4) *Where is the Knowledge in the art PhD?*<sup>85</sup> These four questions became foundational to all our subsequent work and thinking. This paper was accepted for the conference, and distributed (along with all the accepted papers) to the conference delegates in advance. For the conference itself, we went on to rework the conference contribution as a performance, the re-configured paper became an audio recording narrated by a (male) actor. The 'paper' which existed as text, sound and image, was performed in front of a Power Point presentation backdrop. Prior to the event in Helsinki, we canvassed all conference delegates and speakers, sending them questionnaires that asked questions like: Is art research? circle 'true' or 'false'. The concept of a *response* was key. We had, even before going, sought to commence a dialogue and our performative

<sup>84</sup> *Future Response: Is the Question the Answer?* Unpublished paper, see website, <http://www.futurereflections.org.uk>, (accessed 10.11.10).

<sup>85</sup> The 'random looking' capitalisation of words was part of our visual language and method here.

presentation was designed to facilitate and sustain this dialogue. The performative 'paper' presentation attempted to further elicit the participation of the audience through poll-taking and a final survey. These surveys were printed on A4 paper sheets which had the instructions for how to fold a paper air plane printed on the back. Thus the surveys were returned to us by air, by means of becoming paper aeroplanes (as data and thus content towards our ongoing research, see Fig. 2 and Image 6). Our presentation at this conference was the only one to attempt to be both a performative artwork and an academic paper at the same time.<sup>86</sup> However this approach did not conform to the audience's expectations from a conference context, despite its location in an art school. Perhaps this kind of work is in danger of being neither an artwork nor a paper (in the academic sense), but without pushing at the boundaries of both of these categories the status of the work cannot be explained.

This event in Helsinki was followed-up by a submission of a paper for publication, called *Future Reflection: Future Rhetoric* accepted for publication in 'Reflections and Connections: On the relationship between creative production and academic Research'.<sup>87</sup> In the quote below we identify some of the failed aspects of this endeavour, like not being able to close the gaps between our ambitions for the work and the audience and their expectations.

Instead of dialoguing with other Seminar participants, we inadvertently identified ourselves as our own audience. We spoke to one another about our shared interests and our discussion became increasingly insulated, esoteric and closed. We aimed to share our emerging language(s) – our experimental form and figurations – with our peers. But we failed to also share literacy for interpreting these systems. Consequently, some of our propositions were lost in translation. The result: Future Response made (non)sense.<sup>88</sup>

Despite the fact that this paper did not follow the conventions for academic papers, it was accepted (it was the only student paper included in the publication, perhaps this gave us some licence). Our intention was to frame the whole undertaking as site-specific art research, using reflective interpretive loops where the reflection on one project *becomes* the next work. We termed this paper a self-reflective/reflexive undertaking based on the event of the performative paper as situated within the conference as a whole.

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86 This strategy is not unique, the artist Mark Leckey includes lectures as part of his practice, a filmed lecture formed part of his winning Turner Prize 2008 contribution. Fluxus artists like Joseph Beuys and Alan Kaprow both used lectures as a medium for their practice.

87 See appendix A, p.195.

88 'Marsha Bradfield, Katrine Hjelde, Catherine Maffioletti in Nithikul Nimkulrat and Tim O'Riley, (eds.), 'Future Reflections: Future Rhetoric' in *Reflections and Connections: On the relationship between creative production and academic research*, Published by University of Art and Design, Helsinki, 2009, p. 53.





Image 6. Surveys folded and sent back to Future Reflections as paper airplanes during our performative performance: *Future Response: Is the Question the Answer?* Art of Research Conference, Helsinki 2007. Photo: Marsha Bradfield

The composition of this text comprises of a mapping through different temporally dispersed voices as a reflexive dialogue. There are three main voices that discourse in this paper – each situated as either representing the character of Future Reflections Research Group (the R/research student collaboration), the institution (the certifier of Research) and the academic (the certified researcher). These different voices embody some of the diverse positions that regulate practice-based Research's Knowledge production.<sup>89</sup>

The key 'voices' in the published paper (*Future Reflections: Future Rhetoric*) were presented in different fonts to accent the distinct sensibilities at play in the process of collaborative writing. These different voices were part of what was becoming a reflexive approach, where the form of the writing, the repetitions, dialogue, and different fonts, use of ' / ' and prefix -'re' - responded to each other in a generative way. This approach grew out of our emergent methods of reflecting on practice within our own PhD projects. Our own approaches were all different and the aim was not to reach a consensus, but to create a form that could encompass and critically play with the different approaches. The notion of play is important here as working together was at times like a game. The collaboration felt like a license to go along with a process, exploring chance through suspending disbelief, moments of non-knowledge for individuals or even for the whole group. Ways of working familiar to many art practices, as an ongoing strategy, or as a way to move on from a block, a stalemate, or a sense of knowing 'to well'. In our paper *Future Rhetoric* a font type/style did not encapsulate an individual and her opinions in this paper since we all contributed to each voice', but by emphasising the multiple voices, making visible the endless dialogue and discussion, there was a sense of the 'abyss', of refracting from one position to the other. This was not orientated towards a resolution, but rather to make visible the way between us we represented different positions, and how these positions chimed with particular institutional contexts for art research, like the conference in Helsinki, or our own institution, CCW.

### 1.6.2 Critical art based forms of reflection

As noted above as Future Reflections we claimed that such a process is both reflective and reflexive, but what does that mean here? As we work collaboratively and dialogically within an arena, the forms of reflection undertaken by the group can perhaps be said to have, on one level, a Habermasian form. By this, I mean that there was reflection on the institutional context that our work has emerged from, the function of both the work and the context (particularly the immediate context of conferences and art research culture) and on the different agendas of those involved. In this way the reflections becomes reflexive operations and a central

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<sup>89</sup> Bradfield, Hjelde, Maffioletti in Nimkulrat and O'Riley, (eds.) 'Future Reflections: Future Rhetoric'. p. 48.

part of the actual structure of the work itself. However, at the time of completing this work, we did not see the group as undertaking critical theory in the Habermasian sense, because we were focussed on more art-based forms of reflection, where there is no discernible resolution to be found in any form. Thus we cannot claim the work as belonging to a tradition of critical theory as there was no such primary intention. Our art-based reflective processes were more playful than explicitly political and the models for the forms of art-based reflection that we draw on are closer to the description of *mise-en-abyme* that we saw earlier in this chapter. *Mise-en-abyme* has become relatively commonplace in art historical discourse, particularly for texts dealing with the early modern period, proposing its inherent reflexivity as an index of artistic self-awareness.<sup>90</sup> Understood this way, reflexion is, in the sense of *mise-en-abyme*, deeply rooted in art practice, particularly in literature and film, but also in fine art. *Future Reflections* explored the potential of, or for, self-aware artistic reflexivity specifically towards art research. Thus reflexivity in our work is an aesthetic strategy as well as method, exploring its own form and content in a dialogical relationship with the audience. However, it creates (at its best) complex and sometime bewildering relationships between artistic reflexion, (which in an art sense is always directed back on itself) and critical reflection, and involves discourses substantiated by familiar codes and conventions. Thus reflexivity draws our attention to the arbitrariness of these conventions as they exist. Active interpretation is key to engaging with this work, and rigour has to be applied by the viewer/reader as much as by the artist/researcher.<sup>91</sup>

The activities of *Future Reflections* were designed to allow multiple approaches into the work. This approach was developed in order to explore art-based reflexivity as a way to open up the work in a way that avoids predetermining questions that may arise from more traditional engagement. Can this be done rigorously? Perhaps the rigour in this process may not always register with audiences or readers as it does not conform to more generic, well known, research models. The rigour of a project has to be approached on its own terms each time. Subsequently, this also becomes an issue of developing literacies, because rigour has to be discovered rather than presented in advance.<sup>92</sup>

Although this section refers more specifically to Case study 2, I do not mean that this kind of work involved critical reflection of a higher order than the work undertaken for Case Study 1. Nor that these reflective processes cannot be shared (or even transferred) in some way, from more material to more discursive forms. For the

90 Lucien Dallenbach, *Mirror in the Text*, University of Chicago Press, 1989.

91 Marsha Bradfield and Katrine Hjelde, 'Future reflections Future (re)composition' in *Art Monitor*, no. 8, 2010. See appendix B pp. 205.

92 Ibid, p. 44 (p. 216 of thesis).

purposes of analysing reflection, this work lent itself more easily to a discussion here. This is noteworthy, as it may mean that practices that are more word-based can more readily be recognised as reflective or reflexive in most of the meanings of the word(s).

### 1.7 Reflecting (art) knowledge

What are the knowledges(s) reflected in case studies one and two, and can they be defined and become transferable into teaching and learning encounters? Like other professionals, artists can be seen as both producers and consumers of forms of knowledge, as participants in a 'knowledge producing enterprise' and even as contributors to the 'knowledge society' to utilise the language that surrounds ideas of the so called 'knowledge economy'.<sup>93</sup> As art teachers we are thus expected to be sharing our knowledge with our students. As a term, knowledge has no single agreed definition, but despite this challenge, the following section of the thesis will attempt to consider the case studies in terms of 'knowledge production' and the role of reflection in its constitution.<sup>94</sup> It will principally explore how forms of reflection, can be said to construct or form knowledge in art production.

This section begins with a look at some pertinent ideas around knowledge, as well as how these then are connected with notions of research. The problem of knowledge in art, in a historical and philosophical perspective, will be approached through a brief epistemology (theory of knowledge) in relation to art. Which will serve as background for understanding knowledge in terms of current, contemporary art. This Practice Site considers how an understanding of the relationship between forms of knowledge in art practice, (specifically how forms of reflection relates to knowledge formation), may be of consequence for the teaching activities discussed in Site 2: the Teaching Site.

The concern surrounding art as knowledge in this thesis has a parallel in the increasing amount of text and books relating to art research, which implicitly or explicitly address this issue, including Scrivener, O'Riley, Borgdorff, Maharaj, Hannula *et. al.*<sup>95</sup> As my practice(s) span several arenas, from art (i.e., different kinds of art activities from making objects to dematerialised events produced individually or collaboratively) to teaching, there are perhaps different forms of knowledge

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93 See Tom Holert, 'Art in the Knowledge-based Polis', *e-flux journal* 3, February 2009, website, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/40>, (accessed 23.11.10).

94 See *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Sixth Edition, 2007.

95 Scrivener, 'The Art Object does not Embody a Form of Knowledge', O'Riley, 'An inaudible dialogue', Borgdorff, 'The Debate on Research in the Arts', Sarat Maharaj, 'Unfinishable Sketch of "An Unknown Object in 4D": Scenes of Artistic Research', in: Annette W. Balkema and Henk Slager (eds), *Artistic Research*, L&B, Volume 18, Amsterdam/New York: Lier en Boog, 2004, pp. 39-58. Hannula, Souranta and Vadén, *Artistic Research*.



being claimed, at different times, with different dynamics and interrelationships, all of which further complicating the question presented here.

I concur with Sarat Maharaj that the question of knowledge production is indeed at the core of what all research, including art research, should be and should do.<sup>96</sup> Maharaj also timely calls for caution with regards to the use of sweeping categories like for instance 'art' and 'knowledge'. Jan Kaila defines the characteristics of knowledge in the visual artists as the authorial space made up of actions, conceptual thinking and knowledge acquisitions, the space in which the work is made.<sup>97</sup> This proposition does not emphasise the relational or social aspects of knowledge construction, nor does it highlight the role of the viewer/recipient of the outcomes of this authorial space. Temporality is not explicitly addressed through this either. However, this authorial space may be a useful starting point for me if I borrow his notion and re-conceptualise it as a *site* instead of as an authorial space. A site that encompasses both the production of work, reflection in and on the work, and last but not least the connections it enables between itself and an audience or a space.

Knowledge is a word with no one agreed meaning, which can refer to both practical and theoretical understanding. Indeed the term knowledge involves a myriad of related but distinct concepts such as tacit knowledge, situated knowledge, embedded knowledge, procedural knowledge, explicit knowledge, descriptive knowledge, embodied knowledge, know-how and know-that.<sup>98</sup> In this way it is as much an activity as a thing, a verb as well as a noun.<sup>99</sup> Knowledge is, as Foucault has shown, coupled with power, and an attempt to claim or define new knowledge, in any field, implicates us in a power struggle.<sup>100</sup> This is an interesting problem for both art research and art teaching and learning, and the issues of reflection as knowledge producing implicates it in this strife.

The possibilities for a special mode of artistic knowledge production is as seductive as it is problematic. Depending on how we construct and frame this privilege it can be both limiting and expanding for art. What is special (but not exclusive) to art is that it involves a sensory experience. This has always been a problem for philosophy where traditionally knowledge is coupled with truth and accessed or formed through cognition.

96 Maharaj, 'Unfinishable Sketch of "An Unknown Object in 4D"'.  
 97 Jan Kaila, 'What is the Point of Research and Doctoral Studies in Art', in Annette W. Balkema and Henk Slager (eds), *Artistic Research*, Amsterdam /New York: Lier en Boog, Vol. 18, No. 1. 2004 p. 63.

98 Michael Eraut, *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*, London: Routledge Falmer, 1994.

99 I am indebted to Tim O'Riley for the idea of knowledge as a verb.

100 Foucault, *The Order of Things*.

### 1.7.1 Aesthetics

In terms of knowledge and epistemological models, Plato and Aristotle's concept of *mimesis*, underlies the philosophical understanding of art in terms of knowledge. Both Plato and Aristotle saw *mimesis* (Greek μίμησις) as the representation of nature. But for Plato, this representation was twice removed from the 'truth', as it is a representation of something that has already been imitated from an abstract god given idea. By contrast, Aristotle understood humans as creatures driven by a desire to represent, but also to improve, and *mimesis* was part of the search for the timeless and perfect. Representation, in the sense of *mimesis*, was a way towards knowledge: through it, the artist would provide insight into singular events and concrete things.

Such early ideas around *mimesis* slowly developed into the concept of aesthetics, which in its dictionary definition is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature and expression of beauty, in the arts.<sup>101</sup> This comes from the Greek *Aisthesis* meaning sensory perception. According to the enlightenment philosopher Baumgarten, aesthetic knowledge is thus a knowledge based on sensory experience — *gnoseologica inferior* — inferior to that attained through reason alone. Baumgarten, who first used the term aesthetic in 1750, related it specifically to the role of taste. Despite the immense creative and visual development that took place between antiquity and the enlightenment, no sustained understanding of art in these terms has been attempted until Baumgarten's study. Instead neo-platonic and Aristotelic models of art were subsumed into theology, which dominated all thinking at the time.<sup>102</sup>

Immanuel Kant was the most significant enlightenment philosopher in the further development of aesthetic theory. In *Critique of Judgement* he set out to demonstrate that to focus on the subjective aesthetic response does not make aesthetic value a mere function of individual or personal taste, despite believing that beauty or sublimity were not really properties of objects, but ways in which we respond to objects.<sup>103</sup> Kant claimed that judgments of taste are both subjective and universal. They are subjective, because they are responses of pleasure, and do not essentially involve any claims about the properties of the object itself. On the other hand, for Kant aesthetic judgments are universal and not merely personal. That is because in a crucial way, they must be disinterested, not linked to personal desires.

101 *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Sixth Edition, 2007.

102 Magne Malmanger, *Kunsten og det skønne, vesterlandsk estetikk og kunst teori fra Homer til det 19. århundre*, Aschehoug, 2000.

103 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

### 1.7.2 Art Knowledge(s)

There are several contemporary models for understanding knowledge 'production' in art, with different levels of usefulness and clarity and with a different relationships to research.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore there are more fundamental, philosophical ways to think of the potential of art knowledge in relation to society/politics. Aesthetics is still relevant to thinking and theory, not just art theory, as the recent interest in Ranciere and his books such as *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, has shown.<sup>105</sup> However, there is no consensus about best practice or preferred action in terms of knowledge production or understanding, least of all within art research. This problematic of knowledge attribution is not exclusive to arts production, but perhaps it is more accentuated here.<sup>106</sup> As art-research is a relatively recent phenomenon there is also a degree of anxiety.<sup>107</sup>

But as Maharaj points out, it is imperative that some of these issues are resolved, at least on an operational level, as they are so connected with questions of what an art education is all about. As Maharaj observes, 'Artistic research looms into view as an unscripted zone where engineering think-know-feel capacitors and transformers for oneself becomes the thrust of practice'.<sup>108</sup>

## 1.8 Conclusion

Site 1: Practice Site, began with an exploration of its form as a possible discursive site, a construction that will underpin the next two sites. From there I explored this practice site in terms of reflection and similarly the possibility of knowledge(s) claimed through art practice, and aimed to see how forms of reflection may help to describe or understand a process of knowledge mapping. Key philosophers of reflection (Dewey, Habermas and Schön) were explored, and the different

104 For instance Sir Christopher Frayling made a distinction between Research, with capital R, and research in his paper 'Research in Art and Design' – based on the definition found in the Oxford English Dictionary. He defines research with a lowercase 'r' as an investigation, the act of searching, whereas Research with an uppercase 'R' indicates some kind of development. Christopher Frayling, 'Research in Art and Design', *Royal College of Art Research Papers 1* (1):1-5, 1993/1994.

105 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, Continuum, 2006.

106 Different countries have adopted different models for knowledge production in the arts, and as a result not all countries offer the possibility of undertaking doctoral research in visual art. In the case of some Nordic countries there is the opportunity to undertake doctoral research work within arts institutions, this is funded and assessed, however upon successful completion the candidate does not become 'a Doctor'. This is due to both the artist research community and the research community being in agreement about the non-falsifiable nature of artistic research being (perhaps of) equal value, but too different to scientific knowledge to qualify for the same title (for instance in Norway).

107 Candlin, Fiona, 'A proper anxiety? Practice-based PhDs and academic unease', *Working Papers in Art and Design*, 2000, [http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes\\_research/papers/wpades/vol1/candlin2full.html](http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol1/candlin2full.html), (accessed 06.11.2011).

108 Maharaj, 'Unfinishable Sketch of "An Unknown Object in 4D"', p. 45.

ways they propose reflection as a knowledge-forming process was outlined and compared. From this point two case studies were introduced. In the first case study, I attempted to write reflectively, not just in terms of a process of reflection, but also as a way to enact art-based forms of reflection, following Katy MacLeods typology, where practice can be revealed through writing.<sup>109</sup>

The second case study focused on a collaborative reflexive art research project undertaken with Future Reflections research group. The case studies are unrelated art projects and as such they are not comparable in terms of outcomes because as the first deals primarily with the creation of a material object, whilst the second deals with a discursive and performative practice, where the outcomes contribute to the field of art research, as a reflection on art research rather than as discrete art products. However, it was clear that the reflective processes undertaken for both case studies are multiple, overlapping, and not necessarily sequential, even when the reflection appears in the linear format of writing, as in Case Study 1, suggesting a temporal ordering of content. In Case Study 2 it also emerged that working as a group facilitated a particular form of reflexive reflection which was both Habermasian in one sense in its attempt to impact on its frame (its social context, here the emerging world of art research). In another sense it operated reflexively in a more art-like sense, wherein our reflexive work drew on almost narcissistic forms of reflection that would feed back on itself like a 'hall of mirrors' which, whilst frustrating for an audience engaging with our work, also effectively drew our and the audience attention to the processes employed. Perhaps this aspect could be illuminating for others working within an practice-based art research site.

The possibility, desirability even, of practice-based artistic research underpins and motivates this whole research project. Thus, in terms of this project, there are ways in which the Art Practice Site can be seen as primary and privileged, bearing in mind that any delineation of sites is ambiguous and often subject to revisions. The device of using an arts-based notion of discursive sites as a method can be understood as designed to delineate areas of research. In this respect, the research presented here aims to contribute to the institutional discussions about the methodologies of artistic research. As Hannula, Souranta, and Vadén have pointed out, there is still much work to be done within this field.<sup>110</sup>

Unlike many practice-based projects, where specific aspects of practice are pushed in a rigorous and research-oriented way towards a new knowledge claim, this project tried to determine where, within my expanding practices, art knowledge(s) can be seen to reside. In order to see how this is communicated or disseminated

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109 MacLeod, 'The functions of the written text in practice-based PhD submissions'.

110 Hannula, Souranta and Vadén, *Artistic Research*.

in teaching and learning encounters. In this respect, the research in this site did not look for the single new knowledge-claim articulated through practice or through a reflection on practice, but explored different possibilities for *linked practices* to embody and communicate knowledge.



Image 7. *Chelsea Studios*, Alexander Blackman, 2010

## Site 2: Teaching Practice







Chelsea's BA (Hons) Fine art course is one of the most highly regarded and best-known courses in the UK and our graduates have become successful practitioners, including several Turner Prize winners. This course aims to remove the barriers between specialist areas across Fine art by bringing together a range of art practices including; painting, sculpture, film and video, photography, digital media, sound, print, performance and drawing. You are free to explore any of these areas throughout your time on the course and work within an open framework that will challenge you and open up many possibilities. You will be taught through a programme of tutorials, seminars and lectures which allow you to gain an awareness of the dialogue particular to the area you may be exploring. Highly student-centred, the course provides a forum for you to exchange diverse ideas and opinions; peer group learning being central to this experience. Practice and theory are integrated so that you gain an informed and objective awareness of the external contexts and conditions which shape or frame contemporary art practice.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.0 Introduction

The 'teaching site' proposed in this thesis can be regarded as a nexus comprising physical spaces, institutional policy, national and European HE policy, the histories of the art disciplines, the university institution, and finally, the practices of the students and teachers within it. To undertake research within this site is to operate according to the parameters of institutional regulations, ethics, physical spaces and resources, and the curriculum. This research is governed by the deliberate and ongoing creation of a separate and operationally different site to my own art practice. However, since this site overlaps with the practice site, there is a constant dialogic interaction and exchange between them thus creating productive tension between approach and fact.

The purpose of Site 2 is to describe and explore the ways (professional) art practice, is or could be potentially reflected into or through teaching practice within a student-centred course programme.<sup>2</sup> This is ultimately a question of knowledge transfer and hinges on the possibility that reflection between an artist's practice and a student's practice can operate critically within the teaching site. Site 1 discussed different forms of reflective and reflexive processes within art practices and Site 2 will draw on these and see how they can relate to teaching.

Site 2 begins with a discussion of the methodologies deployed. A reflexive methodology was developed in Site 1: Art Practice, from an analysis of theoretical literature (around notions of reflection specifically), and through the process of

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1 From Chelsea College of Art and Design website, <http://www.chelsea.arts.ac.uk/courses/coursesbylevel/undergraduatecourses/bahonsfineart/#>, (accessed 27.05.10).

2 A definition and discussion of student-centred teaching can be found in section 2.1.2.

researching within arts practice in particular. Thus the methodology in Site 2 is not described as an approach but rather as an evolving and developing process. Site 2 also addresses the ethical and related issue of undertaking 'insider research' as part of a practice-based approach. A brief historical context for fine art teaching is followed by introducing artists who treat pedagogy as a form of art practice. Next the institutional place of teaching, Chelsea College of Art and Design is outlined as the physical and institutional site for the educational research part of this project, before moving on to describing the teaching activities relevant for this research and thesis.

The site concludes with a summary of the main points and their relevance for the next part, Site 3: Praxis Site.

## **2.1 Methodology: Turning teaching into research**

The art practice derived method of delineating the research into distinct sites (as introduced and developed in Site 1) is here developed further into a potential research model. The other research methods described, discussed and applied, thus work around, against and within this framework. This approach has varying success, and a discussion will continue about the potential of delineating operational sites in accordance with site-specific practices as a part of an evolving methodology. The structure of outlining my methods here for Site 2 may seem to contradict the assertion that the methods reflexively emerged or altered during the research. However, I will begin by describing the methodology, to make sense of the way that some of the methods evolved from the research described in Site 1, were then adjusted through the engagement with the institutional and other contexts of Site 2.

For the duration of this research project, my teaching practice had to have a dual function: it had to serve both the students' needs — always the primary purpose of teaching — and my own research. Thus activities designed to facilitate students learning had to be examined under an additional lens, that of research. The research project needed to relate to my art practice as well as to my emerging understanding of art as research. There had to be a connection between different aspects of the research, different kinds of practice, teaching and learning. In other words, the different kinds of teaching activities undertaken were, in part, conceived to help me understand where my practice is located, how (my) practice can be understood to contribute to form(s) of knowledge, and how these enter into the teaching/learning process.

An issue for researching within the teaching site was that of being an 'insider' researcher, someone with a preexisting relationship with the potential subjects of

study.<sup>3</sup> Here the subjectivity and bias that arise in this process is problematised in relation to the students and their emerging practices. This raises pertinent issues for the validity and rigour of the research. After all, as Cohen *et al* states, if research does not have validity it can be deemed worthless.<sup>4</sup> Etymologically, validity means to support a point or a claim.<sup>5</sup> This definition corresponds with what I hope to achieve within the totality of this thesis. The propositional nature of validity and rigour can be a problem in terms of art practice-based research where awareness is articulated through several means (different kinds of writing, visual forms etc.), which is why formulating their interrelationships is so crucial.<sup>6</sup> By making the research process as open and as transparent as I can through the writing, it can be argued that readers can construct their own perspectives on this process which 'are equally as valid as our own'.<sup>7</sup> This understanding does not resolve the issue of insider research, but it allows me to use my subjectivity generatively as part of the research process.

At the beginning of the research, I sought to frame some of the teaching/research activities within the prescribed curriculum delivery whilst others were based on or evolved directly from the requirements of the research, with a view to revealing the differences emerging from the two approaches. However, as will be discussed, it proved impossible to keep the different kinds of teaching completely separate. It was important to my course director that research activities undertaken through the normal delivery of the course should not impact detrimentally on the student experience.<sup>8</sup> This section describes the methods used and how these set up a methodological framework, building on the practices described in Site 1, yet relating to the Teaching Site. The methods adapted and changed reflexively in response to the process of research. For instance, crucial ethical considerations shifted the focus of the research in unexpected directions, as we shall see below. The rest of the methodology section will outline different kinds of teaching undertaken as 'research' — with Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a key method — and the fundamental role of reflection in PAR and in this research.

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3 Colin Robson, *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner Researchers*, Blackwell Publishers, 2002.

4 Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keth Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, New York: Routledge, 2007, p.133.

5 Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, Sixth Edition, 2007.

6 Katy MacLeod and Lin Holdridge, 'Related objects of thought: Art and thought, theory and practice', in Malcom Miles (ed.), *New Practices, New Pedagogies: A reader*, London: Routledge, 2005.

7 Cohen, Manion and Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, p. 106.

8 Students could not be expected to be part of a research project through taking part in 'compulsory' course activities. Whereas for other activities, like seminars, etc., that were not obligatory, students could choose if they wanted to take part or not and also there could be transparency and discussion around the nature of this research and its remit.

### 2.1.1 Ethics

For research undertaken within an educational institution there has to be clear ethical guidelines and UAL has its own system and procedures with regards to both pedagogic and art research. The University's Code of Practice on Research Ethics sets out the guiding principles and outlines the obligations and responsibilities for conducting research in an ethical manner.<sup>9</sup> Any research involving participants has to go through an Ethics Committee. Because I was planning to do research on students, not only could this project be seen as involving research subjects but also participants who were in an unequal power relation to myself. My project was approved by the UAL ethics committee with some restriction on the research process: it should not include students that I would be assessing as part of my teaching.<sup>10</sup> This complicated the project as it disqualified me from undertaking research related to any core teaching, as for better or worse, summative assessment is now integral to most core teaching.<sup>11</sup> It was not necessary to challenge this ethical constraint, however, as I wanted to place myself in the centre of the research, to be both the object and subject. I was already exploring this model of research in Site 1. Consequently any research undertaken within the teaching group, i.e., directed at the students, would be treated as a collaboration, as a space where areas of mutual interest could be identified and productively related to through discussion. This approach would not have been possible within the core teaching programme, which requires objective assessment of individual performance. The latter position was instrumental in the development of a shared project with the students — FLAG — which will be dealt with later, in Site 3 of this thesis. This way the teaching/research would be aligned with and directly related to an art research-based process.

### 2.1.2 Teaching

In order to explore how any form of knowledge is transmitted or shared with students it was key to use teaching as one of the methods. Here teaching can be understood

9 See University of the Arts London, Code of Practice on Research Ethics, [http://www.arts.ac.uk/media/oldreddotassets/docs/13\\_-\\_RSDC\\_UAL\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_on\\_Research\\_EthicsForRSDCMarch2011.pdf](http://www.arts.ac.uk/media/oldreddotassets/docs/13_-_RSDC_UAL_Code_of_Practice_on_Research_EthicsForRSDCMarch2011.pdf), (accessed 11.12.11).

10 From Research Ethics Sub-Committee letter: '...approved your application of your research project, subject to the following: (i) Clarification as to whether you intend interviewing students whom you are also assessing. If you are the application should be reconsidered...'.

11 *Formative Assessment*, is primarily concerned with supporting students' development rather than passing judgement on their work. It usually concentrates on helping the student improve rather than on what mark a piece of work deserves.

*Summative Assessment*, refers to assessment which has the primary purpose of judging the standard of work and passing a verdict on the level of achievement. That is, it is more focussed on awarding a mark or grade or class than on helping the student improve (most assessment has formative and summative elements). UAL GLOSSARY of Assessment Terms, <http://www.arts.ac.uk/marking-criteria/glossary.html>, (accessed 07.11.11).

as a component of the practice of research. This way the research project became aligned with a more art-based approach, where the subject (as well as the object) of study was my practice (or practices) across art and teaching. Given that there were both institutional and ethical constraints on this project (as well as my own increasing reservations about some of the ways I had anticipated conducting pedagogic research at the outset), I was increasingly uncomfortable with methods that seemed to objectify the students and their contribution, or ones that did not sit well with my understanding of the student-tutor relationship. Consequently, I decided that approaching teaching practice and research in the same way as I had art practice and research would be the most productive approach. The teaching practice appropriated as a research method for this project can broadly be divided into two categories.

- Teaching that forms the core of the BA Fine Art course provision. This would mainly be 1 to 1 tutorials as an Associate Lecturer (AL) as well as acting as a tutor group leader for two of the three years I undertook this research (the first and third year).<sup>12</sup>
- Special projects that fall under the remit of the course and which fit in with its ethos and aspirations, but which were designed for this research. These projects included:
  - 1. Running an art practice seminar group with a focus on painting called ‘talking around painting’
    2. Conducting theory seminars and lectures directly linked to the research objectives in this thesis.<sup>13</sup> This included theory seminars on *Site Specificity* and on *Knowledge and Art*, as well as a lecture on the history of the art school.

Research within teaching spans three years. The table on the next page indicates the kinds of teaching undertaken within the different years. During the fourth and final year of research, I developed the FLAG project where I deliberately removed myself from all assessment related teaching.

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12 Tutor groups are the backbone to the course provision at Chelsea on the BA Fine Art. There are ca. 4 tutor groups at each level with 25-35 students. During both years I ran a stage two group. Tutor group leaders, supported by a theory staff member assigned to the group, assesses students for practice modules A and B. Groups meet weekly and in addition, I had 1 to 1 tutorials with all students in the group at least twice a year. Also, tutor group leaders are responsible for allocating tutorials with visiting tutors. As a Tutor Group leader you also assume pastoral care for your group.

13 These were called Theory Options at the beginning of this research.

Year	Tutor group	Practice Seminar	Theory Seminar	Other Teaching
1	Tutor Group S2 Run with another member of staff (changing termly)	<i>'talking around painting'</i> (Spring term only)		1 to 1 tutorials
2		<i>'talking around painting'</i>	Theory Option: <i>Site Specificity</i>	1 to 1 tutorials
3	Tutor Group S2 Running group alone	<i>'talking around painting'</i>	Theory Options 1) <i>Site Specificity</i> 2) <i>Knowledge &amp; Art</i>	1 to 1 tutorials Stage 2 lecture on <i>History of the Art School</i>

Table 1. Teaching as Research

The theory seminars are also an important and obligatory component of the course, but here the students can choose which seminar to attend. Lectures are also obligatory and are the only type of Stage 2 teaching that all the students attend together.

Thus the difference between the core teaching and the project-based teaching was the mandatory requirement for students to attend the tutor groups and the 1 to 1's. Tutor groups and tutorials are obligatory and non-attendance can lead to expulsion from the course.<sup>14</sup> Here, I will focus on the research undertaken through teaching, what I found out and how this understanding contributes to the overall project.

### 2.1.3 Participatory Action Research

During the first year of the PhD programme, I undertook the Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning (PG Cert) as a condition of the Doctoral research funding.<sup>15</sup> As part of that process, I carried out two small Action Research (AR) projects. I was able to use aspects of these projects as pilots for the doctoral research, testing out different qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups,

14 From Chelsea BA *Fine Art Handbook 10/11*: 'If you regularly miss sessions you will be contacted by your Course Director or Personal Tutor and offered the opportunity to discuss any difficulties that might be affecting your attendance and ways in which the University might help you attend more regularly. If your attendance continues to be poor you will receive a warning letter, your visa or student loan could be revoked and, eventually, you will be withdrawn from the course.' p. 81.

15 The PG Cert in Teaching and Learning was run by CLTAD and was the standard teaching qualification for HE tutors at the University of the Arts, London. From autumn 2011, this qualification as provided by CLTAD will change and become part of a Continuing Professional Development in Academic Practice in Art, Design and Communication Programme. The two CLIP CETL Doctoral awards were conditional on undertaking this qualification.



and forms of action research. This process was instrumental in determining that it would also be necessary to work with the students in a 'different' way within the PhD project and that I needed to find methods that could acknowledge the students' contributions to the research, such that all contributions, including my own, could be in some ways jointly owned. Thus, I opted for a form of Participatory Action Research (PAR), that built on the Action Research undertaken for the PG Cert, but with an initial focus on the diagnostic stage of the action research cycle. According to Cohen et al., Action Research is regarded as being a methodology that enables a Habermasian notion of critical theory, which was highly relevant to me because of my interest in Habermas' particular notion of reflection.<sup>16</sup> However, as Hannula, Souranta and Vadén points out, at the core of Action Research is the intervention, which has a specific goal. This, in turn, leads to the question: in whose interest is it to promote this goal? There is always the danger that Action Research can become a mechanism of control, like the methods that it was developed to undo. Carr and Kemmis book on action research, *Becoming Critical*, was both a point of departure for this process and an ongoing touch stone.<sup>17</sup> This book has a philosophical grounding and resonates with Habermas work, and as such aims for educational research to operate as critical social science.<sup>18</sup>

The implications and full potential of PAR will be discussed in Site 3, the Praxis Site, which considers the project FLAG, conceived to closely link pedagogy and practice through appropriating aspects of the so-called 'pedagogic turn' in the art world. The main purpose within this section, however, is to analyse and interpret the curriculum-based teaching as a teaching-practice-based activity. Thus, the teaching itself, (or what should more correctly be described as the different forms of student-teacher encounters), was the primary research material-generating activity for Site 2.

For someone who wishes to practice reflectively within their field(s), Action Research provides a somewhat obvious methodology, as observed by Wisker, Cowan and Cohen *et al.*<sup>19</sup> There is a strong link between Action Research as a research methodology and reflective practice within pedagogy. Reflection has two main roles within Action Research: firstly before the plan of action, where the researcher observes and reflects on the current situation. The second phase of

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16 Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, p. 30.

17 Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis, *Becoming Critical: Education Knowledge and Action Research*, RoutledgeFalmer, 2006.

18 Carr and Kemmis, *Becoming Critical*, p. 2.

19 Gina Wisker, *The Postgraduate Research Handbook: Succeed with your MA, MPhil, EdD and PhD*, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Cowan, *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher*.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*.



reflection takes place after a cycle of action, where the action is considered in terms of its effect. Both points of reflection are in a sense retrospectively applied in that they represent distinct activities in a cycle constituted of reflective and non-reflective tasks. As Cohen and all have pointed out it can be said that forms of reflection take place at every stage of Action Research.<sup>20</sup> There are several models for the cycle of Action Research. I have conceptualised this process for this research though the basic action research spiral: observe, reflect, plan, act, which then repeat. However, the smooth diagram is misleading as in the research parts of the cycle would at times take place almost simultaneously, and certainly when working as a group, the cycles would not be synchronised across all involved at all times. Action Research can be seen as having political agenda, (for instance for Carr and Kemmis, striving towards emancipation in the Habermasian sense), and although my research is not politically motivated, politics inevitably comes into any research within an institutional arena.

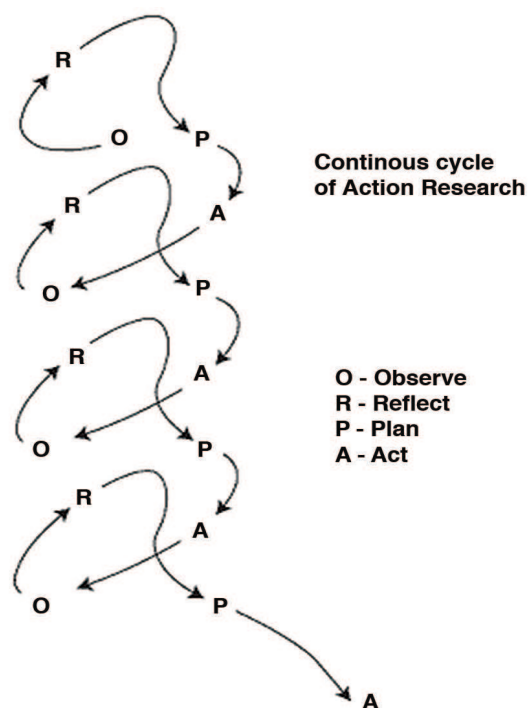


Fig. 3. *Basic Action Research Spiral* from Action Research Induction Kit.<sup>21</sup>

#### 2.1.4 Reflection

For Site 2, (as in Site 1) reflective practices are reapplied within different contexts and for different ends. As noted earlier reflection has a historical connection to educational research as well as to artistic research (see Site 1). For example, in educational research reflection and interpretation are key to understanding the cyclical nature of Action Research. The Habermasian schema, as we just saw, has

<sup>20</sup> Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, p. 310.

<sup>21</sup> See Australian Government website, [http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/pubs/homelessyouth/induction\\_kit/Documents/p3.htm](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/housing/pubs/homelessyouth/induction_kit/Documents/p3.htm), (accessed 23.02.12).

become a significant method within social science through its place within critical theory. As such it is frequently used for pedagogic research too.<sup>22</sup> I have already proposed that there are forms of reflection and reflexion that are integral to, and can be developed from, forms of artistic practice (see Section 1.4.3). I hope also to show that these also come into play in the teaching and learning encounter in the art school.

Within HE the reflective teacher is increasingly held up as a paragon of teaching, supported by a plethora of literature focussing on reflective teaching and reflective teachers that builds on Schön's seminal texts, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, and *The Reflective Practitioner*, and Dewey's *How We Learn*, which was specifically aimed at student teachers. More recent texts include, *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher: Reflection in Action* by John Cowan and *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education* by Anne Brockbank and Ian McGill.<sup>23</sup> Both these texts centre on reflective practice in learning and teaching and are recommended reading for higher education (HE) teaching and learning qualifications such as the PG Cert at Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design (CLTAD). A significant difference between these texts is that Cowan defines a new model for reflective practice (developed from Schön and Kolb's learning cycles), whereas Brockbank and McGill build on and promote different, already existing models to facilitate learning within HE.<sup>24</sup> However, authors of both texts agree that the only way to facilitate reflective learning is to become a reflective practitioner oneself. In essence this means ongoing commitment to reflection on one's own teaching practice. Cowan, Brockbank and McGill further agree that only by reflecting on what we do, how we do it and why we do it as teachers, can we, 'teach' reflection. However, for Site 2, I am more concerned with the ways that private knowledge linked to subjective art practices can be reflected into a public teaching context (as articulated by Brian Catling's quote on p. 19). The above texts are, (unlike this research), not concerned with subject specialisms, nor do they show how a subject or a practice become integral to the teaching-learning encounter. Very little is said about the relationship between practice, research and teaching in general except for teaching as a specialised practice.

Schön's book, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, is more relevant and applicable to this research, first because it deals with how reflective practice can be taught in the application of the concepts of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Secondly and most significantly, it was written specifically for educators

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, pp. 26-32.

<sup>23</sup> Dewey, *How we think*. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. Brookbank and McGill, *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*. Cowan, *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher*.

<sup>24</sup> Brookbank and McGill's approach is more closely linked to this research project.

of professionals.

In *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, Schön discuss the *reflective practicum*, ‘a setting designed for the task of learning a practice’, which for this research should be understood as being part of the teaching site.<sup>25</sup> The reflective practicum relates to the kinds of artistry needed by the student to form a competence within the unfixed and uncertain area of their practice. For Schön, the reflective practicum is a place of doing, where students work in parallel and tutors work with the students actively demonstrating professional practice through reflection-in-action, as well as reflection-on-action. The paradigmatic example of a reflective practicum for Schön is the architecture teaching studio. This concept of the practicum will be referred to later to understand and pinpoint the different kinds of reflection undertaken through teaching, and my attempt to pinpoint a process of reflection where one’s own art practice becomes reflected into teaching practice.

So far in the preamble to Site 2, we can see three main articulations of reflection that have been or will be addressed in the remaining Site 2 text:

1. Reflection as a step or stage within an Action Research cycle
2. The teacher as a reflective practitioner
3. The possibility of reflecting practice *into* teaching

## 2.2 Contextual landscape

I have outlined how certain methods developed in Site 1, were deployed in the teaching stage of this research, here framed as Site 2. I will now describe the contextual landscape of Site 2 in greater detail. Beginning with literature relevant to the research undertaken in Site 2, then move onto historical and contemporary models for fine art teaching, and the physical and institutional site of the research.

### 2.2.1 Relevant literature

Pedagogy can be approached as a practice-based discipline that encompasses the activities of teaching and of learning. This practice-based understanding underpins my research across Site 2, since it was the practical and experiential aspects of teaching that began this process of inquiry. A focus for the more pedagogically orientated part of the research were texts that relate directly to fine art higher education (HE), including the history and development of art colleges in the UK, since such an art college constitutes the immediate context for the research.<sup>26</sup> Only a small proportion of the pedagogic literature actually deals with

<sup>25</sup> Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, p. 37.

<sup>26</sup> I made a decision not to explore extensively the broader literature linked to art education at a primary and secondary level. Generally, I have disregarded this material because it relates to very different kinds of educational institutions (institutional sites) than the HE art school.

the relation between contemporary fine art and HE. Encouragingly, the exploration of discipline-specific pedagogy is gaining momentum, particularly within art and design, a fact noted by Rebekka Kill in her recent PhD thesis, *Academic Identity in the Arts*.<sup>27</sup>

Texts such as James Elkin's *Why art cannot be taught* and Carl Goldstein's *Teaching Art- Art Academies and Schools from Vasari to Albers* examine different historical models of art education from the middle ages onwards, and provide a backdrop to the contemporary education of fine artists in HE.<sup>28</sup> Central to these texts is the notion of 'the curriculum' and the question of what art students actually need to know. These texts do not discuss the relationship between art practice and teaching *per se*, although Elkins briefly mentions the fact that tutors are often artists who make their own work, and concludes that a student reader of his book should; 'read and look at everything the faculty does'.<sup>29</sup> In terms of teaching and learning, Elkin's understanding of what an artist is or should be perpetuates a still potent legacy from the romantic era.<sup>30</sup> This recognition of legacy is key to an understanding of any art curriculum and art educational system. It is not always acknowledged that specific historical events underlie particular forms of art education. The renaissance, classicism, romanticism and early modernism have all shaped models of art education, as explored by Haughton (see section 2.2.2). Equally, it could also be argued that governmental educational policies have impacted significantly on the formation and institutionalisation of art education, thereby introducing political and economic values that might otherwise have been absent from curriculum development.<sup>31</sup> The multiple ways in which a pedagogic model or curriculum is historically determined is key to our understanding of fine art education today, since these presumptions formed aspects of the sites of education in general including the institution of Chelsea. Thus my Teaching Site is similarly ensconced with this context.<sup>32</sup>

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27 Rebekka Kill, *Academic Identity in the Arts: Dialogue, Co-existence, and a Pedagogy of Potentiality*, PhD, Leeds Metropolitan University, 2011.

28 James Elkins, *Why art Cannot Be Taught: A handbook for art students*, University of Illinois Press, 2001. Carl Goldstein, *Teaching Art Academies and Schools from Vasari to Albers*, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

29 Elkins, *ibid*, p. 128.

30 Beatrice Von Bismarck, 'Game Within the Game: Institution: Institutionalisation and Art Education', in Nina Möntmann (ed.), in *Art and its Institutions Current Conflicts, Critique and Collaboration*, Black Dog Publishing, 2006.

31 Malcolm Quinn has explored the birth of the Art School in the UK in, 'The Political Economic Necessity of the Art School 1835–52', where he looks at the political economic background to the development of the first publicly funded art school in Britain, by the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures of 1835/6, *International Journal of Art & Design*, Education Volume 30, Issue 1, 2011, (accessed 04.05.2011).

32 Stuart MacDonald *A Century of Art and Design Education: From Arts and Crafts to Conceptual Art*, Lutterworth Press, 2005, and *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, Lutterworth Press, 2004.

Despite the text referred to above the relationship between contemporary art practice and pedagogy has not been extensively covered in existing pedagogical literature, although there have been several conferences in this field, particularly during the 1990's. Some of these have resulted in published outcomes, such as *The Artist and The Academy: Issues in Fine Art Education and the Wider Cultural Context* and *Artists in the 1990s, Aspects of the Fine Art Curriculum*, and *The Dynamics of Now*.<sup>33</sup> The practice and teaching relationship was central to the conference *The Artist as Teacher* and this relationship was later revisited in various forms by other authors. One of the canonical figures of reflective teaching practice, John Cowan, was invited to speak at this conference, and his paper praises the experiential and, to his mind, the innately reflective aspects of art education, nevertheless, it did not explore how professional art and design practitioners facilitate reflection in the learning situation.<sup>34</sup> Many of the papers from this conference lament reduced staffing or the necessity for staff to become full-time teachers at the expense of their development as practicing artists.

Another important source of material relating to aspects of the relationship between teaching and professional art making is the *Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design* (CLTAD), and its associated conferences in Art and Design (CLTAD 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008). The CLTAD conferences are different from those mentioned above in that here art and design tend to be treated as equivalent, at least for educational purposes and additionally, the emphasis is on student learning within the HE sector. Hence, the CLTAD conferences are aimed directly at educators in Art and Design departments, whereas the conferences mentioned earlier consider fine art education more broadly, as to include criticism, curation, and others functions of the art domain. The CLTAD proceedings contain a number of papers that refer to reflection and reflective practitioners, and those that do so in the context of fine art have been particularly useful to this research.<sup>35</sup> Lastly, specialist journals like *Journal of Visual Arts Practice* and the journal of *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education*, consistently publish pertinent and relevant

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33 Nicholas de Ville and Stephen Foster (ed.), *The Artist and The Academy: Issues in Fine Art Education and the Wider Cultural Context*, John Hansard Gallery, 1994.

Paul Hethrington (ed.), *Artists in the 1990s Their Education and Values*, Tate Gallery, 1994.

Paul Hethrington (ed.), *Aspects of the Fine Art Curriculum*, Tate Gallery, 1996.

William Furlong, Polly Gould, and Paul Hethrington, (eds.), *The Dynamics of Now*, Tate Gallery Publishing, 2000.

34 John Cowan, 'How can students of art and design best be helped to learn and develop' in Paul Hethrington, (ed.) *Artists in the 1990s: Their Education and Values*. London: Tate Gallery Publishing, pp. 28-33, 1994.

35 For instance papers in Section 3 'Drawing and Making as Reflection' in, *Enhancing Curricula: using research and enquiry to inform student learning in the disciplines*, (ed.), Nicholas Houghton, CLTAD, 2008.

papers that engage with aspects specifically relevant to this research and general issues currently under examination by art and design, education researchers.<sup>36</sup> For analytical purposes, I draw upon models proposed by Nicholas de Ville and Stephen Foster, Nicholas Haughton, and Alison Shreeve; models which I first came across in these conference proceedings, and which I will outline in the next sections.<sup>37</sup>

Judith Carroll has written around what she calls 'hidden frames of reference' for artists teaching in Australia. In her PhD, *Artists who Teach*, she has challenged the belief that an artist's practice conforms to an integrated and discipline-defined model, serving as the basis of pedagogy in fine art teaching.<sup>38</sup> Instead, she believes that there are certain concealed frames of reference. By this she means that the artist's beliefs about art teaching are not necessarily directly related to their own practice, but actually relate more to their own art education. This work raises important questions about tutor predispositions as well as questions what exactly the term 'artist's practice' means when discussed in relation to teaching. Contemporary artists perform different roles, such as those of theorist, archivist, activist and technician, and use a range of platforms from exhibition, think-tank, to relational audience participation.<sup>39</sup> Does an artistic practice mean produced works, which, in the context of contemporary practice could be immaterial, relational, etc., or can artistic practice be seen to incorporate the performing of any activities that are related to that practice, including teaching? If the answer to these questions are yes, then one would expect that such an inclusive way of viewing the artistic practice would mean that new questions need to be asked about the relationship between art and teaching practice.

### 2.2.2 Historic models of fine art teaching

What is contemporary fine art pedagogy? What are its constitutive elements and how do the different actors within the educational field understand them? Most

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36 For instance: Angela Devas, 'Reflection as confession: discipline and docility in/on the student body', *Art, Design & Communication* 3: 1, 2004, pp. 33-46.

Ann-Mari Edström, 'Art students making use of studio conversations', *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education*, vol 7: 1, 2008, pp. 31-44.

Howard Riley, 'Beyond the Horizon: Future directions for the teaching of visual arts practice', *Journal of Visual Arts Practice*, Volume 6:1, 2007, pp. 73-80.

37 Nicholas de Ville, & Stephen Foster, ed. *The Artist and The Academy: Issues in Fine Art Education and the Wider Cultural Context*, John Hansard Gallery, 1994. Alison Jane Shreeve, *Transitions: Variations in tutors' experience of practice and teaching relations in art and design*, PhD, Lancaster University, 2008.

38 Unpublished thesis cited in, Judith Carroll 'Convention and Practice', Working Papers in Art and Design 3, 2004, <[http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes\\_research/papers/wpades/vol3/jcfull.html](http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol3/jcfull.html)>, (accessed 27 May 2010).

39 Relational aesthetics as defined by Nicolas Bourriaud in *Relational aesthetics*, Les presses du réel, 2002.



important for this the Teaching Site, is the question of how the interrelationship between art practice and teaching practice has been conceived and what this says about how knowledge is formed, articulated and shared, accepting that fine art, in the context of this research, refers to what we may loosely term the Western tradition.

In his paper, *'The Art Curriculum: What is it? Where does it come from? Where is it going'*, Houghton identifies six 'curriculum types' that have all been implemented in Europe at various times: apprenticeship, traditional academic, formalist, romantic, conceptual and professional.<sup>40</sup> The apprenticeship model has its origins in the guild system of the Middle Ages where the emphasis was placed firmly on obtaining skills from a master. As art academies were founded from the Renaissance onwards, the traditional academic model complemented the apprenticeships, before becoming the early 19th century establishments for formal art education. The formalist system of art education is linked with the Bauhaus and became prevalent from circa 1950.<sup>41</sup> The romantic curriculum is closely coupled with the formalist curriculum, but here the main principle is the unique individuality of the student and their need to 'express' themselves. The conceptual model moved the emphasis away from any in-depth engagement with materials and techniques and placed the emphasis on underlying concepts. The final type is the professional curriculum. This is bound tightly to the art world and present day trends, and the emphasis is on how to build a successful career in the art world. Houghton claims that the curricula in use today in art institutions are usually a mixture of these different models.<sup>42</sup>

### 2.2.3 Contemporary models of fine art education

Houghton's delineations of models is consistent with other historical surveys on this topic.<sup>43</sup> However, it is not the only way to think about how art education operates. In *The Artist and The Academy*, Nicholas de Ville and Stephen Foster outline what they see as the two predominant contemporary models: the *Transgressive Academy* and the *Therapeutic Academy*.<sup>44</sup> In the transgressive model there is an

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40 Nicholas Houghton, 'The Art Curriculum: What is it? Where does it come from? Where is it going?' In *Enhancing Curricula: using research and enquiry to inform student learning in the disciplines*, London: Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design, 2009.

41 Bauhaus 1919-1933, Weimar, Dessau, Berlin. Famous for developing a formalist approach to teaching art and design. Bauhaus means 'house of construction' in German which references the way that domestic architecture was central to their approach. See Frank Whitford, *Bauhaus*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1984.

42 Haughton, *ibid*, p. 324.

43 See, for instance, the more comprehensive book by Stuart MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, Cambridge, Lutterworth Press, 2004.

44 Nicholas de Ville, Nicholas & Stephen Foster, (eds.), *The Artist and The Academy: Issues in Fine Art Education and the Wider Cultural Context*, John Hansard Gallery, 1994.



expectation that work will express radical individuation. This model can be seen as consistent with Haughton's formalist and romantic models, which in turn lean heavily on modernist ideas around avant-garde art. The therapeutic model, by contrast, is distinguished by its political and social stance, where the aim is society betterment and where consensus functions differently to that in the transgressive model. The therapeutic model also overlaps with Haughton's types, particularly the conceptual type. Many of the typical aspects of the transgressive model (i.e. its focus on talent) would, for instance be seen as regressive under a therapeutic model, which is directed towards a responsible, harmonious and enabling institution, where students are in strong accord with the academy. The therapeutic model seems to be more aligned with specific political and social agendas, like critical and feminist theory within educational practice, than with an education in the arts. Particularly pedagogic ideals around the purpose of education as being to help students to develop as humans, projects a completely different perspective on the value of an (art) education.<sup>45</sup> De Ville and Foster acknowledge that no institution operates as purely one or the other, they go on to identify what they see as a problem: 'Evidence suggests that it is usual for teaching teams to utilise aspects of both models in a sort of ad hoc mixed economy'.<sup>46</sup> For them the issue is that no member of staff can represent the institution as each member of staff operates from their own understanding of therapeutic and transgressive models in relation to their own beliefs (based on their practice, teaching and own art education). Thus, there is no productive discussion in the contemporary art school about the effects of contradictory value systems on students and the learning environment.

Implicit in both Haughton's and de Ville and Foster's schemas is that different types relate to particular forms of artistic practice. Haughton even lists examples, such as the relations between the artist teacher of the Bauhaus and the formalist school. We can also see forms of community-based dialogic art practices share aspects of the therapeutic model.<sup>47</sup> How exactly these models are performed by individuals and teams within current educational institutions (like Chelsea) and how students understand them has not been extensively researched. However, these models are useful for looking at the way individual artists conceptualise art and teaching and how this situation is perceived by both the institution and the

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45 For instance, the Instituto Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, the main art academy in Uruguay has a programme of art education focused on fostering the development of creative and aesthetically sensible citizens. In this endeavour the teaching builds on the pedagogic theories of Herbert Read, John Dewey and Ovide Decroly. Their original curriculum was devised by the student body who took over the running of the school in the early 1960s. After being closed by the military in 1973, it reopened in 1985 to continue where they had left of.

46 de Ville and Foster, (eds.), *The Artist and The Academy*, p. 20.

47 See Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, University of California Press, 2004.

students. Furthermore, in de Ville and Foster's introduction two radically different understandings of practice are assumed. For the transgressive model, practice is conceived as individualistic — it cannot be truly shared — it can be held up as an example, perhaps, but students and tutors 'own' their own practice. Also implicit in the transgressive model is the idea that the student should transgress the tutor's practice. There is a desire which relates to the ideals of avant-garde art practice — that the student's practice usurps or transcends that of the teacher. In the therapeutic model it seems that practice does not belong to either student or tutor, but is created through shared endeavours of participation, dialogue and relational engagement.<sup>48</sup> The therapeutic model, then, can be seen through the lens of critical theory and Habermas' emancipatory knowledge constituent interests.<sup>49</sup>

#### 2.2.4 Practice and teaching variations

Another tool for interpreting teaching as research outcomes is Alison Shreeve's categorization of practitioner-tutor's perceptions of the interrelationship between practice and teaching.<sup>50</sup> Shreeve's five categories of practitioner/tutor perception of the interrelationship between practice and teaching are as follows:

1. Dropping in: Knowledge for practice seen as being transferred to the student from the tutor with a focus on (teacher/artists) own practice. Asymmetrical relationship
2. Moving across: Focus is on teaching. Knowledge from practice is used towards teaching students. Asymmetrical relationship.
3. Two camps: Teaching and practice are seen as different and separate things. There is a tension in the balance between them. Symmetrical relationship
4. Balancing: Fluid exchange of knowledge between both practice and teaching. Symmetrical relationship.
5. Integrating: Elision between practice and teaching knowledge, where they become one and the same thing. Holistic relationship.<sup>51</sup>

Shreeve conducted her research on tutors from a variety of art and design disciplines. Consequently, the above categories are not purely related to fine art. I think this may be significant because there are differences between the practices of a designer or craft person and a fine artist, notably in terms of the alleged autonomy of fine art as it is perceived to exist independently (although this point is debatable).

48 Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*.

49 de Ville and Foster, (eds.), *The Artist and The Academy*, pp. 18-19.

50 Alison Shreeve, *Transitions: variation in tutors' experience of practice and teaching relations in art and design*, PhD Thesis, Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University, 2008.

51 Shreeve, *Transitions*, p. 74.

Structural Component of practice teaching relations	Referential Component			
	Transferring knowledge from practice	Using knowledge from practice	Exchanging knowledge from practice	Eliding knowledge between practice and teaching
Asymmetrical	1	2		
Symmetrical		3	4	
Holistic				5

Table 2. Variation in practitioner tutors' experience of practice/ teaching relations.<sup>52</sup>

Shreeve does not propose these categories as fixed traits of individuals, but rather as relationships that are influenced by the educational context. It is also possible to experience more than one approach simultaneously. Shreeve's first, (and perhaps second) category is consistent with Haugton's academic model. Here both tutor and student may understand this tutor-orientated situation as being both the most appropriate as well as the most desirable interrelationship. Foster and de Ville's therapeutic model can be visualised as category 5, the Integrating Model, as the non-hierarchical relationship between practice and teaching which here demands a degree of harmony between students and tutors in the educational institution. Returning to context, factors such as the course structure or a dominant method of delivery may necessitate a teaching strategy that fits in with the course rather than one which emerges from the individual tutor's practice, or from ideas of how they wish this interrelationship to operate. By contrast, Carroll's study suggest that tutors often teach as they themselves had been taught, irrespective of their practice as artists.<sup>53</sup>

This thesis postulates that ideas of knowledges, what they are, and where they are to be found in the fine art teaching environment will vary significantly depending on the type of curriculum dominating the course in question (and the implicit and explicit pedagogic strategies underlying these). Furthermore, Shreeve's research confirms, that there seems to be some kind of transfer taking place between practice and teaching, even within the student-centred learning encounters that are the norm in the art school. Certainly that is how the tutors interviewed understood the situation. However, it also seems that Shreeves categories operate more descriptively than analytically, by which I mean that they do not question the various art practice and teaching interrelationships, and the ways that practice could critically inform teaching.

<sup>52</sup> Shreeve, *Transitions*, p. 85.

<sup>53</sup> Judith Carroll, 'Convention and Practice'.

### 2.2.5 Pedagogy as art practice

There are, as we have seen, multiple ways that art practice and teaching intersect, in an historical as well as a contemporary sense. Here, I want to briefly outline some specific artists and cultural ‘moments’ where the relationship between teaching and practice has been pronounced, as a means of plotting the cultural lineage of the practice-based research processes presented here, and to structure the arguments to be developed in the last part of this thesis, Site 3: Praxis Site.

Kristina Lee Podesva’s article, *The Pedagogical Turn* discusses artists who see education as a form of art and nominates German artist, activist and teacher Josef Beuys (1921-1986), as a key figure based on his teaching practice in the 1970s at the Academy in Dusseldorf (Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf).<sup>54</sup> Beuys built on the pedagogical practices developed at Bauhaus, but also set the scene for current contemporary practices where teaching becomes an art practice, of a kind now interpreted as a forerunner for the ‘educational turn’.

Before Beuys, the Bauhaus artists were among the first to explicitly question the distinction between life and art (but not exclusively through educational methods).<sup>55</sup> However, they did not appropriate pedagogical forms in their artistic production but developed pedagogic methods based on their art work. At the Bauhaus, there was a great interest in pedagogy generally: several of the artists who taught there were also trained school teachers.<sup>56</sup> An artist and teacher like Beuys, by contrast, appropriated certain educational forms for his artistic production, presenting lectures as artistic performances, and making blackboard drawings/paintings which were and still are considered as art works.<sup>57</sup> His performance-lectures were intended to be ongoing, prompting discussion that involved the audience as part of the artist’s living sculpture project. Beuys proposed that every one can be an artist, simply through participation in cultural and political life. However, there was a contradiction at the core of his practice: despite seeking art and equality for all, his endeavours hinged entirely on his unique persona and particular political and

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54 Kristina Lee Podesva, *The Pedagogical Turn: Brief Notes on Education as Art*, Fillip 6, 2007, <http://www.fillip.ca./content/a-pedagogical-turn>, (accessed 22.11.11).

55 The Bauhaus teaching method sought to replace the traditional pupil-teacher relationship with an idea of a community of artists working together, aiming to bring art back into contact with everyday life. Design was therefore given as much, if not more, emphasis as fine art. See, Frank Whitford, *Bauhaus*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1984.

56 For example Johannes Itten, who developed the Foundation Course (Preliminary Course) at Bauhaus, Jeffrey Saletnik, *Josef Albers, Eva Hesse, and the Imperative of Teaching*, Tate Papers, 2007, <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/tatepapers/07spring/saletnik.htm>, (accessed 15.03.10).

57 For example, *Ohne Titel* (Four Blackboards), Chalk on blackboard 1216 x 914 x 18 mm, 1972, Tate Modern.

cultural motives.<sup>58</sup>

His work, however, was crucial for later artists whose practices used dematerialised mediums and forms, including lectures and discussions, such as Andrea Fraser, whose name is generally associated with the emergence of institutional critique.<sup>59</sup> For Fraser the medium is the lecture which constitutes the art itself. Beuys' totalising practice and art as institutional critique can be understood as sowing the seeds for relational aesthetics, where the viewers and the artists co-produce the meaning of the work by taking Beuys democratising ideas one step further.<sup>60</sup>

Irit Rogoff identified and outlined this 'turning' towards pedagogy in an article of the same name. This was framed as a turning towards art education as a model for art practice, both for individual artists but also for curators and museums.<sup>61</sup> However, she is not alone in pointing out that there is currently a great deal of interest in 'the academy' as a particular site of cultural knowledge production, and as the main site for recent models of institutional critique.<sup>62</sup> However, unlike the forms of institutional critique operating within the gallery and museum systems, this interest in the academy is happening outside of the art school itself. Pedagogy as Art has, instead, been adopted by museums, galleries and online projects, removed from academic art education. This educational turn is now an ubiquitous feature of contemporary art practices and, interestingly, a plethora of educationally-based arts practices have emerged in parallel with the research discussed here. As I will show later, this recently available pedagogic material from the art world helped to shape the research.

Relevant material from the 'educational turn' includes Salon Discussion: 'You Talkin' to me? Why art is turning to education' at the ICA (14 July 2008); exhibitions like A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.; the failed Manifesta 6 biennial; unitednationsplaza (Berlin

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58 Nicolas Bourriaud in *Relational Aesthetics* does not, as Clare Bishp has pointed out in *Antagonism and Relational Art*, mention Beuys often. When he does, for instance, on p. 70, it is to differentiate Beuys project of 'social sculpture' from relational aesthetics. Claire Bishop, *Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics*, October 110 (10), Fall 2004, pp. 51-79.

59 Andrea Fraser (born 1965) is a New York-based performance artist who has become associated with institutional critique. See, Andrea Fraser, *Museum Highlights*, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005.

60 The degree to which relational aesthetics is inclusive and participatory (or the problems related to this notion) in the way that for instance Dave Beech has outlined, is not a discussion to have here. Instead I will continue outlining the impact of relational aesthetics in relation to ideas around pedagogy and practice in Site 3: Praxis Site. See, Dave Beech, 'include me out', *Art Monthly* issue 315, April 2008.

61 Irit Rogoff, 'Turning', *e-flux*, 0 (11/08), [www.e-flux.com/journal/view/18](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/18), (accessed 15.06.09).

62 What Maria Lind refers to as the fourth wave of institutional critique. Maria Lind, 'When Water is Gushing In' *I Can't Work Like This*, Printed Project Issue 6, eds. Anton Vidokle and Tirdad Zolghadr, published by VAI, Dublin, 2006.

07), Documenta 12 (Kassel 2007); and Night School - New Museum (NY 2008); conferences like Summit Kein (Berlin 07); the work of curators like Anton Vidokle and artist groups like Copenhagen Free University. This interest is echoed in art magazines, such as *Art Monthly*, *Frieze* (issue 101/2006), *Fillip Review* (Issue 6 / 2007), *e-flux* (#14 03/2010) and others, all of which have published articles or whole issues devoted to 'the academy'.<sup>63</sup> The first 'reader' published is *Curating the Educational Turn*, where many of those contributing to the exhibitions, events and magazine articles above are included.<sup>64</sup> The burgeoning interest in 'the academy' relates specifically to art schools in Europe and the USA, (and is often concerned with their perceived shortcomings), but the real interest lies in the idea of a notional, de-located academy, a site of cultural knowledge production detached from its historical and institutional setting. However, the relationship between the formal, higher educational institution and these utopian ideas around an academy can be seen to be held in tension, a fact which informs this thesis. However, the increasing exteriority of art pedagogic practice can, I think, be read as a missed opportunity by HE institutions, which may have the potential to function as a critical link between art practices inside and outside of the academy. I will return to this observation in the final praxis site.

### 2.2.6 The institutional place of teaching: Chelsea BA FA

The research presented here was undertaken within and on the BA Fine Art (FA) course at Chelsea College of Art and Design. This BA fine art course has circa 100 students at each stage, including a small number of part-time students. It is the largest undergraduate course at Chelsea and a well-regarded course nationally and internationally with a distinguished history. Chelsea as an institution is part of CCW, (Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon), which is itself part of UAL (University of the Arts London), the largest arts university in Europe. Although the individual colleges within UAL have different profiles and histories, their subsumption under

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63 A.C.A.D.E.M.Y, initiated by Angelika Nollert, was a collective project between Hamburger Kunstverein, MuKHA Antwerp, Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven, and the Department of Visual Cultures, Goldsmiths, London University, and was accompanied by a book edited by A. Nollert and I. Rogoff et al. *Revolver - Archiv für aktuelle Kunst*, 2006. Summit Kein was organized by a collective: Irit Rogoff (London), Florian Schneider (Munich), Nora Sternfeld (Vienna), Susanne Lang (Berlin), Nicolas Siepen (Berlin), Kodwo Eshun (London), in collaboration with the HAU theatres, unitednationsplaza, BootLab, and the Bundeskulturstiftung, all in Berlin. For Documenta 12 see, [http://archiv.documenta.de/100\\_tage.html?&L=1](http://archiv.documenta.de/100_tage.html?&L=1), (accessed 02.02.12). For unitednationsplaza and Nightschool NY see, <http://www.unitednationsplaza.org/>, (accessed 02.02.12). The archive for Copenhagen Free University can be found here: <http://copenhagenfreeuniversity.dk/index1.html>, (accessed 02.20.12). For Manifesta 6: <http://manifesta.org/manifesta-6/>, (accessed 02.20.12). Of particular relevance to the UK is the special issue on Art Education by *Art Monthly*, which included contributions from a number of artist teachers currently working within the UK art school. *Art Monthly* 320, October 2008.

64 Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, (eds.), *Curating and the Educational turn*, Occasional Table London: Open Editions, 2010.



UAL, in combination with a general tendency towards educational standardisation and unification, resulting from both the European-wide Bologna process and UK governmental directives, means that the kinds of fine art teaching and learning activities undertaken by staff and students at Chelsea can be seen to be broadly similar to those that are undertaken elsewhere within the UAL, the UK and, increasingly, Europe.<sup>65</sup> UK Art Educational institutions do have a particular history, which relates to, yet is distinct from other Higher Education subjects.<sup>66</sup> However, it is reasonable to suppose that the research undertaken in response to this context (Chelsea BA FA) is likely to be relevant to art and design teaching institutions generally, and to other art institutions, such as museums, that also have an educational remit.

### 2.3 Researching teaching within the teaching site

A key feature for FA teaching, including that at Chelsea, is a focus on student-centred learning, where the needs of the student are placed at the centre of the educational experience. This requires that students are active and responsible participants in their own learning.

The pedagogic base for student-centred learning can be found with progressive educationalist, such as John Dewey. However, student-centred learning is not without its problems. For instance, the best way for students to express their learning may be in conflict with the requirements of the assessment process. In addition, as Linda Drew shows in her paper *The Experience of Teaching Creative*

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65 Bologna accord refers to the creation of the European Higher Education Area which began the process of making degree standards more comparable across Europe. See EHEA website for full account, <http://www.ehea.info/>, (accessed 02.11.11).

The Dearing Report (1997) refers to the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, a series of reports into the future of higher education in the UK.

66 Below are some of the key dates and events for the development of an art school like Chelsea. Of particular note, both in term of national history and in terms of relevance for my research, I will mention the first and second Coldstream report, (the 1960 National Advisory Council on Art Education report also called the *First Report of the National Advisory Council on Art Education*) which led to the teaching of art and design *history* in art schools (and subsequently art and design theory – see the second Coldstream report called *The Structure of Art and Design Education in the Further Education Sector*) in order to give studio practice an academic credibility.

1960 Coldstream Report – leading to more academic entrance requirements and the introduction of a theory component in art and design studies – subsequent growth in sector.

1968 Hornsey Art School occupation (Paris student uprisings).

1988 Education Reform Act – reform affecting all levels of education in UK.

1988 London Institute created under Education Reform Act.

1992 Further Education Act – all polytechnics are now universities.

1993 London Institute able to award degrees.

1997 Dearing Report.

1997 QAA – Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

1990 Bologna Process.

2003 London Institute becomes University of the Arts, London.



*Practices*, a student-centred approach is often espoused rather than a norm.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless I have proceeded with the student-centred approach as a given, both since this research follows from the educational setting in which it is located, and because this stance questions the possibility of reflection of practice from tutor to student. In student-centred learning within the art school, the student's practice defines the terms of student-tutor engagement and is the focus of engagement in tutorials and crits.<sup>68</sup> Generally, it is reasonably clear how the discussion between the student and tutor relates to the student's practice. What is not at all clear, however, is how the tutor's art practice comes to bear on the interaction and learning process (if indeed it does at all). It is proposed that an articulation of this mechanism, if and when it occurs, be useful for the educational site under examination in this research and I will argue, for the art educational institution itself. Thus, within the research period I explored the following:

1. What is the role of tutor's art practice within the teaching site?
2. How does knowledge from my arts practice relate/or translate into to my teaching practice?

The teaching undertaken under an umbrella of research ranged from seminars, 1 to 1's, and theory seminars, most of which are *curriculum-defined teaching*, meaning that in one form or another it related directly to the curriculum structure of the BA FA at Chelsea.

### 2.3.1 Teaching as research

Here I will describe the different teaching practices undertaken with a research intention: the tutor group, the practice seminar, the theory seminar and the 1 to 1. For each instance, I will use examples to pinpoint moments where I found myself drawing on forms of 'knowledge' from within my practice and directing it toward the teaching and learning encounter. What this qualitative approach does not do and cannot do is to inform us of how the students may have understood this relationship between my practice and teaching.

This was why I chose to focus the research on the interface between my own practices; in this way at least the students' general experience was not overly instrumentalised. It did however, mean that much of the teaching could not be explicitly constructed as research, or certainly not as research on or directly involving students. So that for some substantial parts of the teaching, for instance

67 Linda Drew, *The experience of teaching creative practices: Conceptions and approaches to teaching in the community of practice dimension*, CLTAD, 2004.

68 BA FA at Chelsea defines itself as student-centred. See quote on p. 65 of this thesis, or College of Art and Design website, <http://www.chelsea.arts.ac.uk/courses/coursesbylevel/undergraduatecourses/bahonsfineart/#>, (accessed 27.05.10).

in the Tutor Group (which will be discussed below), my practice was very much kept in the background and only brought to bear upon an encounter when this fitted in with the student-centred approach.

### 2.3.2 Tutor group

The tutor group was central to the delivery of the BA FA course at Chelsea during my research, so the exploration of teaching as practice in this thesis starts here. How and why the tutor group was vital will become clear as we proceed. For the first and the third year of this research, I ran one of the Stage Two tutor groups with 26-28 students.<sup>69</sup> On the course as a whole there were 4 groups for each stage, 12 groups in total. During the first year a tutor group leader was assisted by other members of staff. The tutors allocated to me were more experienced teachers than I, with a longer employment history at Chelsea. They ran their own groups as well, again supported by other staff. This form of regular team teaching was not in other components of the course and proved significant in terms of my research on reflective practice. As I will show, by the second year that I ran the tutor group (the third year of the research), the tutor group system had changed, and group tutors ran their group on their own. Most groups were run by the core fine art team, with some being led by AL's such as myself, to cover for staff on research leave or similar.<sup>70</sup> Apart from a small action research intervention that I did in the first year of running the group as part of the PG Cert, the research here was not Participatory Action Research, as described in section 2.1.3. Instead, the more ethnographic approach taken involved reflection as per the first phase of Action Research, which focussed on identifying themes and issues, and reflecting on the activities of the group.<sup>71</sup> Aspects of this process then informed the research undertaken in the Practice Seminar and the Theory Seminar.

Typically tutor groups meet in a designated seminar room (usually a constant throughout the year), that is to say outside the studios, where the students make their art work. This is in contrast to Schön's reflective practicum, which centres on the activities of the studio. The groups' primary function is to facilitate discussions around work in progress and completed art works, within a relatively 'clean' space. The model for these encounters is influenced by the art 'crit', but the Tutor Group

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69 Students numbers fluctuated in the group during the year as students went on exchange and exchange students joined the group.

70 From UAL website: 'Why become an Associate Lecturer or Visiting Practitioner? We offer excellent hourly rates for lecturing part-time, either during daytime or evenings. This is more than a chance to supplement your career, as it is a teaching role without comparison offering you the chance to work with some of the finest students in your field. You will also have the opportunity to freshen up your own thinking and learn in an environment supportive of everyone's development.' See UAL website, <http://www.arts.ac.uk/jobs/associatelecturers/>, (accessed 11.06.11).

71 Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, pp. 297-312.

is more open-ended and less focused on criticism. The meetings offer a testing ground for work or work in progress, but more importantly they serve as a discursive arena for all students to practice 'talking about practice', their own and that of their peers. The main idea is that these discussions are largely student-led, around 4-5 student presentations of work at different stages of completion. As a structure, the seminar can in itself be described as reflective, as it involves forms of interpretation that can be described as a form of critical reflection. The tutor group is thus a group of students interpreting an art work, or a work in progress, discursively.

Group crits and seminars, however, afford engagement with reflection in a different way. Crits/seminars often have a defined model for engagement (an institutionally defined structure) but generally the models for reflective engagement within these systems are not articulated and thus there is no real transparency and no real discussion of the multi-layered possibilities afforded by the crit/seminar as an activity. Instead it is a session based around presentations of students' work (student-centred teaching model), but how the discursive site of the tutor's practice enters into this equation, and how engagement is constituted by the institutional site, is often not raised. Thus the tutor's practice can take on an aura of authority and unwittingly operate as a model. In terms of reflection, this becomes in some ways a lost opportunity for both group reflection, in terms of reflective learning, and for forms of reflective interpretation.<sup>72</sup>

This quote is from a paper co-written with Michaela Ross after running the tutor group for a year (See appendix D). It shows that early on I was aware of a gap between the potential offered by the open interpretive, hermeneutic form of the tutor group and the sense that the tutor group leader can end up unwittingly facilitating a role for herself precisely as the model or figure of authority that the teaching activity is trying to avoid, due to a lack of transparency (and thus accidentally establishing Haughton's academic type as a model). This situation, I believe, makes it difficult to form connections between the interpretative reflective form of the seminar itself and the reflections on their own work, that students are asked to undertake as part of assessment.

The Tutor Group is also used to disseminate relevant information on assessment, competitions, opportunities, student exhibitions, reminders of deadlines, in short all the day to day practical aspects of the course that impact on the students. Thus, in many ways the tutor has to 'represent' the course and the institution in these meetings, as the tutor group is the main and consistent point of contact between students and staff and hence, between students and the formal requirements of the course. The two main practice modules for stage two, A and B, are situated

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72 Katrine Hjelde and Michaela Ross, 'Constructing a Reflective Site within Art Education', in *Enhancing Curricula: using research and enquiry to inform student learning in the disciplines*, (ed.), Nicholas Houghton, CLTAD, 2008.

within the tutor group structure and together represent 70 credits out of the total 120 for stage two.<sup>73</sup> In every sense these tutor group meetings are one of the core activities of the BA fine art course.

*Year one of tutor group research:* The first year that I had a group it was part of a completely new system of course delivery, where all staff (including myself) were finding our way as much as the students were.<sup>74</sup>

During both years the tutor group helped to facilitate friendships and collaborations and a number of students from my groups went on to curate events together outside of the Chelsea site, building on the familiarity and appreciation of each others work and interests. There was an emphasis on constructive criticism: the atmosphere was one of generosity and openness to different practices and conceptual frameworks. There was a sense that a work of art could be the start rather than the destination, particularly in the context of presenting works that were not finished, that were not properly 'installed' and that the student had perhaps not fully thought or worked through yet. This meant that the discussions, although critical, were not hostile and were almost always respectful and positive. Sometimes the student who was presenting would reflect on their own work in a self-critical way. However, students tended not to be overly self-critical once a rapport within the group had been established.

Because my art practice relies heavily on the specificity of installation, I found myself time and again asking students why they had hung a work on the wall, why a piece was just propped on the floor, how the various students showing work on the same day worked together to install work, and in particular, why a piece of work was not in any sense installed, meaning hung or sensitively placed in the space (which happened often).

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<sup>73</sup> See *Course Handbook 2008/2009 BA (HONS) Fine Art: Unit 2A: Studio Practice 30 Credits*: 'In this unit the emphasis of your enquiries becomes more focussed on the emerging concerns that relate to your studio practice. A more discriminating approach to this research will assist in a clearer articulation of the basis and context of your studio work. Professional development and related activities will build on previous curatorial and exhibiting experience. You will become more discriminating in your participation in related events and opportunities that are relevant to your developing art practice. Unit 2B: Studio Practice 40 Credits: 'In this unit you continue your practice through your chosen media, with a more critical approach. This is informed by an enhanced awareness of conceptual and formal possibilities. Analytical and critical skills will be developed in studio practice by seeking to relate and locate your work within broader issues and aspects of contemporary practice. Negotiated learning continues through critical discussion with your tutors and encourages independent learning.' p. 22.

<sup>74</sup> The BA FA was moving into a new mode of course delivery, from a pathway system with painting, sculpture and media pathways, to a general FA course. Instead of pathways the central structure within the course was the tutor group and the weekly meetings of these groups.

K: Why did you decided to hang this work on the wall in this way

S: Oh — there were some screws already there so I thought I would see if my work would fit and when it did I let it.

K: Ideally though, is this how you would like to display it?

S: Not sure, maybe it would have been better to hang it further away from X's work, as they don't go well together.

K: Yes — but I am thinking equally about the way your work could situate itself architecturally, I think we will see this piece very differently depending on how and where it is hung.<sup>75</sup>

The focus was on the student's work but the format allowed for discussions to move freely from the work towards more general themes. However, I did find myself often steering the discussion back to the work, as the learning outcomes for the modules are mainly linked to the students' own practice.<sup>76</sup>

At first, I took notes during the tutor roup meetings (as did many of the students), to reflect on afterwards. In the beginning I did not have an entirely clear sense of my research project, I had more an idea that I had to generate some 'data'. I soon found out that this particular process of reflection is a key recommendation in *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, where it should ideally be undertaken with colleagues or other peers. Almost from the start I did not feel comfortable with this method of reflection, as the process felt contrived and I sensed I could not make it really 'reflect' what had occurred.<sup>77</sup> However, this frustration proved an incentive to explore other methods of reflecting and for re-considering my ideas of reflection in this context. Additionally, the notes clearly revealed my preoccupation with my role as a teacher in the group — something I was new to and anxious to get 'right' (despite not having thought through what getting it right might mean). Below is a typical note written after a teaching session,

Good turn out for seminar today, worried as essay deadline is soon. Think I talked way to much — again... Must not be so worried about silence, or am I worried that students are bored? ..... should I have been more critical when I spoke of X's work? He is very good but (his work) could be so much better. However, if I had been much tougher on him than everybody else then students might have picked up on this 'inverted favouritism'. Actually, as it was the students stepped up and largely did this (being critical) which is what I wanted, but it makes me look a bit ineffectual.

75 Reconstructed exchange from notes K=Katrine, S=Student.

76 For the academic year beginning 2011 there is a different unit framework in place for Stage 2. The above describes the framework at the time of the research.

77 I intuitively felt concerned about the forms of reflection a student is asked to undertake, from tutorial reports to self assessment forms.

When I looked at these notes as they began to mount up, I could not see that they could capture a real sense of reflection between my practice and my teaching practice. I kept it up — but slowly the note taking in the seminar became less as I became more interested in other ways to reflect and sensed a growing awareness of the many ‘forms’ of reflection, and associated problems of who and what reflection might be for. Now that I am working with and (re)reading this material I am struck by the ‘self critical’ tone and see that what I often wrote down can be classified as ‘non-examples’ of reflection, for instance pure narration/log or a sense of writing down something because I felt I ought to.<sup>78</sup> These notes and my after-session reflections interestingly failed to capture a real sense of the interpretative reflection around artworks that the group were constantly undertaking as these were too complex and too contextual, absorbing me to a degree where I stopped taking notes that were helpful and rather noted down my recollection of the situation afterwards.

For me this material demonstrates an unformed attempt to be a reflective teacher in Cowan and Brockbank and McGill’s sense, a teacher who reflects on their own practice in order to improve it. But as such, this process was not fulfilling the key functions of creating reflective students, reflective learners. My reflection did not happen with the students, nor were they to have access to its outcomes, and it would not have been appropriate to give them access to this material since it would further set my tutor group apart from the other tutor groups. The reflections that the students and I did undertake as a group, together, were not translated properly in notes. Increasingly, I began to feel that although the process of reflecting on one’s own teaching can no doubt lead to improvements, it is problematic in the light of Habermas’s claim that the detachment necessary to reflect effectively sets up a space for self-deception to occur.<sup>79</sup> I was also very uncomfortable comparing my note-taking to the kinds of reflections students are asked to undertake, for instance, as part of their Module A and B assessment. On reflection, I perceived myself as a (PhD) student, and as such there was a definite sense that I had to reflect in the ‘right’ way, even as I was aware that this kind of thinking hinders meaningful reflection.

As noted earlier, in the first year, I did not discuss my own work in the seminar, (or my own experiences as a doctoral student). The focus was purely on the students’ work. I did tell them about my research project but we did not discuss it. However, I did conduct a small-scale action research project with them as part of the PG

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78 This is Cowan’s term for examples of activities that are not reflective. See, Cowan, *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher*.

79 Habermas, *Knowledge and human interests*, 1971.



Cert.<sup>80</sup> At that point however, we did discuss the PG Cert, action research and their involvement.<sup>81</sup> That was the extent of the discussion, partly because of ethical and other restrictions placed on my research (as I would be responsible for their assessment), but also because the research process and the tutor group system were new to me.<sup>82</sup>

For the first year running the group there was always two teachers present in each session. This enabled a form of reflection between practice and teaching to occur that I had not considered at the outset, and which I did not properly notice until I ran the group on my own. Because each of us would engage with the work shown by the students, it was soon clear that we all engaged in this task from different positions. Our stance in this context is, as Carroll points out, likely to be influenced by aspects of our own experience as students, but it was increasingly evident that in the space between our utterances, our different practises and experiences, linked to our individual art practices would present themselves.<sup>83</sup>

K: This piece (small wooden construction on floor) seems quite architectural, despite its size. I keep thinking of dwellings, nesting, going into a space, do you know Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*?

S: No, I don't know that book, but will look it up. As this work is small I was thinking of it more like a thing, a small object.

ST: This work is not about space, nor can I see it as an object — it seems to be all about process, the processes you have taken the material through. A very playful, yet time consuming process. A bit mad, yet the beauty of it belies the madness of the process.<sup>84</sup>

Team teaching in this way often encourages playing 'devils advocate' in the exchange, and as such one or the other of the tutors would often say something that would set up an alternative interpretation of a work, its placing and its relation to the world. This would not necessarily represent the tutor's actual opinion of the work as such, but in Schön's words, it would be a display of professional artistry, an artistry of teaching *informed* by a particular practice.<sup>85</sup> Any exchange like the one above is not simply evidence of a critical practice, but I have wondered if all our exchanges were studied (via discourse analysis for instance), it would reveal the coherent practices underlying the discussion. What the students seemed to pick

80 Another action research project than the one I ended up writing-up for the PG Cert degree, which I will not be discussing here as it is not directly relevant to this thesis.

81 PG Cert Action Research projects are generally exempt from ethics clearance.

82 However students would often ask me more, informally, outside of the group.

83 Judith Carroll, 'Convention and Practice'.

84 Reconstructed exchange based on notes, K=Katrine, S=Student, ST=Second tutor.

85 See, 'Teaching Professional Artistry' in Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, pp. 22-40.



up on was that different tutors represented different 'life worlds' within art and that our professional artistry was, as teachers, *not* interchangeable but very specific and particular.

*Year two of tutor group research:* The second year I ran the group, I was on my own and then both my own practice and research were introduced into the discussions of the group, partially because many of the students already knew me (from Theory seminar or 1 to 1's) and many were very interested in knowing about the research, but also about my work in general. I was also more relaxed and confident in both my role as tutor group leader and as a researcher and found that I could discuss aspects of my practice and my research, particularly in more informal context whilst also putting the ethical considerations into the frame. All involved were comfortable with the format and both staff and students were poised to take full ownership of 'their' group. This led to students in my group organising or 'curating' the seminars. From the spring term after we had looked at everyone's work at least once, the students articulated themes that they had identified as being pertinent to their own practices. These themes ranged from 'Participation' to 'Narcissism and Sexuality'. It was my responsibility to make sure all students had a chance to present more than once, but the students were responsible for the rest of the planning, including the dissemination of any relevant reading or other material prior to the themed presentation. Material and information was circulated via a shared email list, by myself, and also by the students in the group.

In summary the research undertaken through the tutor group was explorative and can be seen as the observing and planning part of an Action Research cycle. When the seminar was run with two staff, as in the first year of running tutor group, I found that a tutor's practice became more 'visible' in teaching encounters in the 'gap' between two tutors utterances. I began to think about other ways to create a 'space' for art practice to reflect into teaching, which could have potential towards a transparency of artistic stance without resorting to an academic model of teaching.

### 2.3.3 Practice Seminar

*'talking around painting'* was a practice-seminar, which I began as part of the PG Cert Action Research projects undertaken during the first year of research.<sup>86</sup> The AR project commenced half way through the spring term of my first year of research. This seminar was not part of the mandatory curriculum, but rather an option for interested students. As practice seminars are not assessed, I had more freedom to undertake this project in a more research-orientated way, without breaching the conditions placed on me by the Ethics Committee. Not assessing

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<sup>86</sup> Practice seminars are seminars that are optional and offered as an extra activity in relation to the main curriculum. These seminars are not assessment linked.

a student does not fundamentally change the tutor student relationship/hierarchy but it does open it up and shifts the focus away from learning outcomes and assessment criteria, including forms of teaching that are otherwise very similar to assessed teaching. I was interested in running a number of seminars that were based on a specific form of arts practice, in order to see if this would create a clearer connection between arts practice and teaching. I hoped this strategy would help me to conceptualise the interrelationship between practice and teaching, with reference to Shreeve's categories of variation in practitioner tutors' experience of practice/teaching relations. Painting was chosen because it is (still) very relevant to many art students and as I have explained, I myself 'trained' as a painter and still see painting as fundamental to my own increasingly diverse artistic activities. I was mindful of Carroll's assertion that tutors teach as they have themselves been taught and I was interested to see how much this would prove to be the case.<sup>87</sup> My aim was to also explore with the students how my education has shaped my current arts practice, and how aspects of both my current and past practice (including as a student) influence my current teaching. The reasons for the *intervention* (in action research terms) of setting up this seminar was as follows:<sup>88</sup>

1. The tutor's practice is not normally discussed in the teaching environment. Thus, there is a lack of transparency with regards to the tutor's practice and its influence on their pedagogical approach.
2. Tutor groups do not enable sustained in-depth discussion about specific kinds of practice, because the diversity of practice within the tutor group and insufficient time to discuss each kind of in depth.
3. The tutor groups do not foster peer-assisted learning across year groups, as they are based within a stage of the BAFA course.
4. There is generally little crossover between the theory component of the fine art course and the studio component. The students are, in a sense, responsible for individually 'holding' these in relation to each other.<sup>89</sup> The tutor group meeting does not offer much scope (again owing to time constraints ) for discussing such interrelationships.

With these factors in mind, the objectives of this practice seminar series (and of this part of the research) could, therefore, be defined as:

.....  
87 Judith Carroll, 'Convention and Practice'.

88 In action research, to make a change based on the initial identification of the problem, the fact-finding and the planning, the 'first step of action' as Kurt Lewin, who coined the term action research would say, consists of an intervention into the status quo. See, Kurt Lewin and Gertrud Weiss Lewin, *Resolving social conflicts: selected papers on group dynamics*, London: Souvenir Press, 1973.

89 I am indebted to Dr. Mo Throp, Course Director BA Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art and Design, 2004-2011, for this way of describing the theory practice interrelationship.

- To explore how reflecting on one's own practice, (as an artist/as an art teacher) whilst teaching, affects how students reflect on their own working process.
- To demonstrate and explore with the students different forms of reflective practice, including more art-based forms of reflection.

The idea was to use the notion of 'painting' as a starting point for an open-ended exploration of works that in some way are relevant to the history, theory or production of paintings. This was not to be a technical, skills-based workshop, or master class, and certainly not a way of re-framing art teaching in terms of the Academy model, whereby students closely and uncritically model their own practice on that of a 'master'. Instead, the aim was to show how my own practice is an important frame of reference that facilitates my teaching.

Students signed up to the seminar by putting their names on a list, many of whom proved to be unknown to me. Several did not paint in the strictest sense, but felt their practice was aligned with an expanded understanding of painting. Firstly, I introduced myself and the ideas behind the seminar, followed by a PowerPoint presentation on my own work. My aim was to set up a particular and quite specific point of departure in terms of my own practice, though *not* as a model or exemplar, in the academy model outlined by Houghton, or by 'dropping in' according to Shreeve's categories. The talk was called *Constructing a Reflective Site*, which referred directly to this doctoral research and touched upon many of my concerns with respect to my own art and teaching practices.

During the first session, we discussed what the participating students wanted to get out of the seminars and how we could then structure the series. We rejected a thematic structure. Instead, we agreed that discussions of work (in the manner of seminar group crits) understandable as painting would be a productive way to proceed, leaving any themes to evolve organically from discussion. We also agreed to go as a group to see other exhibitions outside of Chelsea. The students also floated the idea of some kind of outcome from these sessions. Curating an exhibition was discussed, but finally we agreed on a reading list compiled by all participants, each of whom would nominate one or two texts that were important to them in relation to their practice. This, it was thought, could become an evolving theoretical foundation for the seminars. The discussion leading to this outcome encouraged joint ownership of the seminar, where the students saw themselves more clearly as stakeholders in its form and content.

As a tutor, I was in the 'back seat' from the second seminar onwards, operating as a moderator but offering, when appropriate, references back to previous sessions

as a way of reflecting on the relationship between my utterances in the seminar and their relation to my practice. The students, themselves also linked discussions back both to my initial presentation and the discussion of preceding weeks, as shown in the example below:

K: This part of the painting works really well for me, the colours, the paint handling and the subject come together more coherently here than in the other parts.

S: X's colours are a little like some of the ones you use?

K: Yes — they are a bit now that you mention it. I'll tell you why I like these kinds of murky colours: it is not because I find them 'inherently beautiful', but I find them quite evocative of times gone by, and as X's paintings seem to be dealing with ideas of nostalgia it works very well. I think my work often deals with nostalgia too — so there is a connection there for sure but we are not nostalgic for the same time or same things despite the, at times, superficially similar colour scheme.

There was not a sense of fixed parameters for discussion, but rather a sense that these parameters might be negotiated, and renegotiated as a result of discussion around any of the works. In this sense, the focus of the seminar shifted from the preoccupations I had when I commenced it as an Action Research project and reflexively began to incorporate the students interests and perceived problems (as well as strengths) with existing seminar-based teaching. Reflexivity is a key aspect of action research and as Cohen *et al.* have stated the researchers views 'do not hold precedence of the views of participants'.<sup>90</sup>

Students were keen to continue the discussions beyond the limits of the seminar and initiated a space on the Chelsea Wiki as an extension of the physical meetings, where relevant information regarding exhibitions and meetings, and the reading list, were placed. This website could be modified by any of the students involved.<sup>91</sup> The image on page 111, shows the website as it looked after the seminar had been running for several terms. It shows how other artist and tutors became involved in this seminar series, particularly through (informal) artist talks in the meetings which preceded crits. The students also begun to take turns to curate crits, forming groups with a perceived common ground, sometimes by articulating concerns felt to be relevant for the guest artist/tutor.

Interestingly, the wiki also sets up a very hierarchical form because I was nominated as the 'chair'. This demonstrates how this wiki worked but also how the students

90 Cohen, Manion and Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*, p. 310.

91 Chelsea Wiki: [www.chelseawiki.org](http://www.chelseawiki.org). This student-founded and run website was an evolving space designed for art, discussion, collaborative practice and shared educational experiences. The wiki is currently offline (last accessed 11.05.09).



Image 8. Screen shot from Chelsea wiki, April 2009.

perceived the relationship between them and me: despite operating as stakeholders to some degree they still look to me as the 'tutor' (chair). After a while, I found that I used the wiki for disseminating information about the meetings. The students, however, used it more 'reflectively', often writing up notes from a session and posting them, a process which varied greatly over the years. Some of the students were much more interested in using the wiki than others, and at different points in the programme only I used it, and as such the wiki did not represent the whole student group and its progression over the years.

For our last meeting during the first year (2007) of the practice seminar, we toured the Chelsea degree show. This was quite poignant, because the graduating students of 2007 were the last to graduate under the previous pathway system of painting, sculpture and media. Going around the exhibition together was thus a way to compare, contrast and further discuss ideas of practice; what is useful about engaging with certain notions of practice, what is not useful; how do other kinds of practice challenge one's own practice; and how can that challenge become relevant and critical through forms of reflection?

The first two terms of the 'talking around painting' seminar series (Spring - Summer 2007) were written up as the Action Research (AR) project for my PG Cert, but I felt a responsibility to continue with the seminars, because the feedback had been overwhelmingly positive and increasing numbers of students were interested in attending. As a consequence the project continued for the next three years with some of the students attending for their entire degree, with enough students who had been with the group from the start to give the seminars a sense of continuity and direction. The seminar developed in form and format over the three years as we (the 'group' and I) all felt more sure of its purpose, and wanted to occasionally challenge this. Increasingly other staff became involved too. I was also able to link the group's activities to visiting artist talks, as just mentioned, and to other events that were taking place elsewhere on the course, such as the mid-year stage exhibitions where 'after hours' crits took place. These were connected to discussions around the paintings in the exhibition as well as to how the works did or did not relate to each other (particularly other paintings, but also other works), in the exhibition. It was, at least on a superficial level, a very successful AR intervention, in that students reported a great deal of satisfaction with this seminar series and it did seem to make a case for a subject-specific seminar with a transparent and critical relationship to a particular practice, including that exemplified by tutors.

The 'talking around painting' seminar programme encouraged a more direct exploration between all the participants' practices including tutor and students. In particular, the subject specific form allowed for a transparency and an articulation of



an artistic position which seemed to be helpful for students when they attempted to do this too. However, crucially this seemed to be predominantly within a discursive realm as actual practice, in the sense of practicing, was absent from a seminar setting. This, of course, brings us back to the discussion around what an artist's practice is and an expanded understanding would include teaching and related activities. However, this does not address the fact that actual hands-on painting is entirely absent from this teaching process. Here reflection also operates within a discursive realm, that of the seminar format, and not linked to a specific place or 'reflective practicum', to use Schön's term. The subject-specific focus allowed for discursive links to be made evident from my practice towards teaching. It also allowed for a more reflexive mode of engagement between myself and the students, linked to the method of action research, but not linked to forms of reflexivity as found in art practice.

#### **2.3.4 Theory seminar**

The Theory Seminars (called Options at the beginning of this research project) are part of the theory programme at Chelsea and while they are mandatory they are not assessed. Instead, the principle is that students select a theory seminar that matches their practice interest in terms of a theory-practice interrelationship and that they use the seminar towards research for their essays (stage one and two) or to inform their thesis (stage three). Typically they run over 4 weekly sessions of 1.5 hours each.

I ran two different theory seminar series: one based around ideas of site-specific arts practice and another structured around ideas of knowledge in art (both of which related directly to my own evolving research interests). On the course across the year there would be up to twenty of these theory seminars, whereas there would be two to three practice seminars.<sup>92</sup> The theory seminars involved all the students, unlike practice seminars which are not part of the curriculum. The theory seminars were similar to the practice seminars in that permanent and visiting staff could integrate their specific art and research interests within the programme. The theory seminars are the main place where staff could openly declare a specific allegiance to, or interest in, a particular practice or theory, within the curriculum-based teaching on the BA FA. Often an 'allegiance' to an area of theory will be implicitly, rather than explicitly, articulated, and thus it was sometimes more the case that a member of staff covered an area so as to contribute to the variety of the programme, rather than reflecting a current research area directly linked to their practice.

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<sup>92</sup> Running concurrently to 'talking around painting' there were regularly seminars on photography, on documentary film making, performance, participatory art practice and public sculpture. 'talking around painting' was the only practice seminar ongoing for four years.



When teaching on the theory seminars, I was very open about the relationship between the seminar topic and my own practice and research interests: how I had become interested in the subject and why I thought it important enough to warrant being taught on the theory programme. I would sometimes illustrate points by using images of my own work, which directly related aspects of my practice to a theoretical idea. For the site-specific theory seminar, the 4 sessions would have the following structure: The 1st session defined the terms and the overall structure for the seminars; to introduce theorists to be considered, such as Miwon Kwon, and how I had used her and others to structure the content of the series; and to demonstrate how I became interested in site-specificity through my own work (including showing some slides of my own work). The next three sessions, dealt with different kinds of site specific practice, discussed short texts by, for instance, Kwon, Daniel Buren, Maria Lind, etc., recommended readings between the sessions; and examined and discussed as a group images of artworks that could be said to fit in with different theories of site specificity.

Increasingly, I also encouraged student participation in the theory seminars. For the Knowledge in Art theory seminar series, students thus presented their own work in relation to the theme, but also presented on texts suggested on the reading list. This worked very well, and allowed for explicit links to be made by the students themselves between their practice and particular theories, foregrounding the way that I had explicitly demonstrated links between selected artist and a particular theory but also similarly teased out relationship between theory and practice in relation to my own work. This way of teaching is dependent on a high student level of interaction and willingness to both participate and to negotiate the content and form of the interaction, a method of teaching quite close to Brookbank and McGill reflective practitioner model, the difference being the ongoing reference to another practice, my art practice.<sup>93</sup>

Nevertheless, these theory seminar sessions were far more tutor-led than the 'talking around painting' seminar described in section 2.3.3 and more even than the Tutor Group described in section 2.3.2, partly because there was an expectation that the content, would be delivered by the tutor due to the remit of the seminars. Consequently, it seemed even more important to me that I qualified my position in terms of the interactions that were taking place in the theory seminar. The reflective process in the theory seminar could be characterised as qualifying and reiterating my position in terms of practice whilst simultaneously discussing how different artist's practice had informed a particular form or vein of research. For

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93 Anne Brookbank and Ian McGill, *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, SRHE and Open University, 2007.

instance, the notion of site-specificity, was exemplified by the selection of particular artists and pertinent theories.

### 2.3.5. 1 to 1

The studio 'facilitates the integration of thinking and making within the creative process', and in this context it may be particularly useful if there is a sense for the student as to how that process can be seen to take place for the tutor.<sup>94</sup>

The 1 to 1 tutorial is one of the cornerstones of contemporary fine art education in most UK HE art schools. In my experience, and anecdotally, this aspect of art education is something students and tutors value highly. Going back to Schön's reflective practicum idea, this was the only part of my teaching that always took place in the studios. The Tutor Group and the 'talking around painting' seminars sometimes ventured into the studio, but generally took place in the seminar room. A studio is a very different setting to a seminar room. Students often feel more at home in the former, as it contains their own personal work spaces. Also, the studio feels like a space of potentiality and as such a student is more likely to refer to failed work (as opposed to unfinished work) than the seminar context. Although tutors are highly unlikely to demonstrate how to do something in this context, and even less likely to do this directly on a student's work, it is possible that notes and drawings might be produced and given to a student. This practice of 'note taking' was formalised at Chelsea during the period of the research, as tutors were required to fill out a form in triplicate during the tutorial: one copy for the student, one for tutor, and one for the file. These forms thus became a very useful record of what kind of things were said by me and how my suggestions, for instance, relate to my own practice. For the 1 to 1 tutorials these forms soon became my main record of these encounters.

Looking at my copies of the forms, I found that I often referred to books or exhibitions that I myself had recently seen or read, and on one occasion mentioned one book to almost half of all the students I saw that day. I was completely preoccupied by this text and found myself projecting my own emerging insights onto the students work that I confronted. I would make a point of qualifying such suggestions, by saying that they reflected things I was looking at for my own practice and research, and then explaining what I had got from them whilst avoiding turning the tutorial into a session about my own art practice.

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<sup>94</sup> Rebecca Fortnum 'On not knowing what you are doing; the importance of the studio to practice', paper delivered at *Location: Museum, Academy, Studio*, 34th Annual Conference Association of Art Historians, 2-4th of April 2008, Tate Britain and Tate Modern, London.

## 2.4 Analysis

These descriptions of the different teaching devices: the tutor group, practice seminars, theory seminars and the 1 to 1, suggested a number of issues and observations. Some analysis is evidenced in the preceding sections and this will be expanded and synthesised here. The teaching models outlined by Haughton, de Ville and Foster will be used as a tool for interpreting the encounter between students' practices and my art practice. I will also revisit Shreeve's categories of variations in practice/teaching relations as a structure to discuss the transmission of knowledge from practice towards teaching, within these related, but subtly different 'teaching as research' projects. How can these different kinds of teaching enable knowledge gained through practice to enter into the teaching-learning encounter?

Schön has stated that to learn a practice is to be initiated into a community of practitioners, and the *practicum* is the setting designed for the task of learning.<sup>95</sup> However, it is clear that none of the seminars described above constituted a practicum in Schön's terms, as there was no making within these events, and consequently there was no possibility of reflection-in-action by either me or the students.

Etienne Wenger has taken up the idea of a 'community of practice' and developed this into a theory of situated learning.<sup>96</sup> He outlines three key characteristics of a community of practice:

- *The domain*: 'It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest'.
- *The community*: 'Members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other'
- *The practice*: 'Members of a community of practice are practitioners'.<sup>97</sup>

I will use these ideas to articulate relationships that form between students within the groups, and for understanding how much of the learning in an art school could be said to be situated and social (taking place in the canteen, corridor, studio, outside of time-tabled teaching activities) and thus less reliant on a tutor. However, like the practicum model, it does not provide a very clear schema for exploring how the tutors artistic practice is reflected into the teaching context when this actual practice is removed from the studio/teaching context. Actual material engagement happens elsewhere, both for students and for the artist/tutor, and for all the

<sup>95</sup> Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*.

<sup>96</sup> Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp.6-7.

<sup>97</sup> Etienne Wenger, 'Communities of practice. A brief introduction', *Communities of practice*, <http://www.ewenger.com/theory/>, (accessed 14.02.2010).

teaching-as-research encounters. The closest we get to the making of work is in the 1 to 1. Unlike the communities of practice that Wenger uses as a case study (i.e., claims processors in health insurance, who hone their practice all the time), the practice that is shared in the art school seminars, (for instance, here, in ‘talking around painting’) happens in a discursive realm. Thus the community of practice that the students belong to is one of being students, but not (if we follow Wenger or Schön’s understanding of a community of practice), of being emerging artists. By undertaking teaching-as-research within the compulsory and the non-compulsory aspects of the course (the ‘talking around painting’ seminars, and theory seminars), it was possible to set up a structure of ‘transparency’ between art and teaching practices. I will now look more closely at what this might mean.

#### **2.4.1 Reflecting art practice into art pedagogy**

Let us consider the curriculum types outlined in sections 2.3.2. and 2.3.3, by Haughton and de Ville and Foster, with a view to pinpointing the teaching perspectives that seem to underlie or inform the different activities that I undertook during the research period. Do these offer a useful framework for exploring the kinds of reflection between practice and teaching possible? Overall, the BA fine art course at Chelsea fits the mixed economy model, which can be seen as located between the transgressive and the therapeutic models, fostered by different kinds of teaching engagement. Notwithstanding that these models are not explicitly articulated in any of the course material, (which is consistent with what de Ville and Foster found), this is fairly typical.<sup>98</sup> Most of the curriculum types outlined by Haughton can be implicitly found to varying degrees within the course structure. For instance, echoes of the apprenticeship model can be found in the teaching that takes place in the workshop, which is realised through instruction in techniques by technicians. The romantic model is the ‘ghost in the machine’, where the image of the artist as a romantic genius lingers. This is a persuasive image entertained on some level by most students, particularly UK and EU students. However, very few would admit to fully buying into the ‘artist as creative genius’ myth associated with the romantic model. The formalist model is something most Western art students (and staff) have had some experience of as foundation students. It can be seen to form the backdrop to the discursive practices that constitute the seminars and crits which, as discussions almost always relate to the form of a work at some point. The work’s success or lack of it in formal terms, is always under scrutiny. The conceptual model is one of the most easily identifiable types within the curriculum, because it is heavily reliant on discursive activities and it is underpinned by the theory program and the commitment to the positive benefits of the theory-practice relationship. The conceptual model in fine art practice underpins the emphasis on

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<sup>98</sup> de Ville and Foster, (eds.), *The Artist and The Academy*.

art as *being about something*. As such it relates to a particular and recent history of conceptual arts practice. The professional curriculum is represented through an emphasis on exhibitions in and out of the college and also through an increasing interest within UAL in the need for Professional Practice and Development (PPD). However, the emphasis is not on 'how to succeed in the art world', which is what I understand Haughton's professional type to be addressing. Instead the emphasis is on the holistic development of well-rounded, critically-engaged individuals who can take responsibility for their own learning and apply this competence as a transferable skill in the real world. Thus the BA FA course at Chelsea can be described as operating a broadly conceptual teaching framework, but with strong formalist undercurrents and a ghostly romantic presence.

Reflection in teaching and learning is, as we saw in section 2.2.4, directed toward the idea of the teacher as a reflective practitioner, one who reflects on his/her own teaching to make it better and more effective. There is very little literature on how (professional) practice is to be understood as a component of the teaching process and how it might be reflected upon if we take reflection as framed by Dewey, Schön or Habermas. In *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, Schön employs the example of the architecture tutorial as exemplary of how reflective practice is taught and learned.<sup>99</sup> However, the kind of hands-on process of critical evaluation and decision making in action that he describes is far from the kind of teaching I deliver at Chelsea, where my own competences in terms of an art practice enter the discursive realm of the teaching site only, through speech, as I do not demonstrate forms of practice or technical procedure or alter the physical manifestation of the work of my students. Thus, only knowledge related to a discursive sphere, can be reflected into the teaching encounter. This slots my teaching into a conceptual framework as discourse centres on conceptual ideas. As we have seen the student-centred ethos of the course is in part responsible for a bias towards talking rather than doing, and my own teaching activities do fit into this conceptual framework.

Considered through Shreeve's categories of variations of perceptions between teaching and learning the teaching I undertook would seem mostly to include a sense of *moving across*, (second category) with focus on teaching, with the more balancing, exchange based model in operation for the teaching least linked to assessment and obligatory teaching activities, like 'talking around painting'. Shreeve's categories seemed very useful for articulating the variation of tutor/practitioner relations but are less helpful towards examining the kind of critical reflection possible between art and teaching practice, and as such will not develop or articulate the possible knowledge(s) that are held in tension between them.

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99 Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*.

Here I do not mean tension in the way that Shreeve uses the word in the third model, (the symmetrical two-camps model), but rather a *critical tension* where one examines and critiques the other.

## 2.5 Conclusion

This Teaching site was set up to research both my current teaching practice and to offer a way to develop my teaching practice as far as this would be compatible with the course structure, the ethical constraints of my research programme and my own concerns around the student-tutor relationship. Thus the research ranged from work undertaken through forms of reflection within curriculum based teaching, (ie, Tutor Group), to Action Research-based teaching designed to respond or react to a perceived 'problem', (i.e., 'talking around painting') which in turn, led me to develop the 'talking around painting' seminar and to undertake theory seminars that could enable an explicit and transparent reflection *between* my practice and research interest and the topic of the seminar. I found that it was possible to teach from an explicit place of practice without reverting back to an academy model, or even to the recent (at Chelsea) pathway (painting, sculpture, media) system.

A reversal towards a pathway system or academic model was avoided by explicitly articulating my project to the students, and reflecting on that position (a process related to the reflective practitioner articulated by Cowan in *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher* for instance), and from that point having general discussions around what this process could mean for us all. It was important that the students were able to articulate their interests and concerns and to be able to influence and shape the encounters, both to enable a student-centred focus but also to consider *together* what it means to declare an allegiance to a practice, making a belief system visible, articulating it as just one of many possible belief systems and making space for students to do this also. Thus, I found a way to teach *from* my practice and to articulate and discuss this process. However, I felt increasingly frustrated with the way that these processes operated firmly within a discursive realm. Although I might show images of my work, this did not involve sharing the process of doing or actually 'practicing' as an artist. I began to think of a way to be practicing *with* the students, to undertake work that was work whilst involving student tutor encounters. How could teaching and practice in an active sense reflect into each other? The integrating model as described by Shreeve (category 5), suggest a situation where art and practice can become one and the same thing through an elision between them. However, I did not look for practice and teaching to become one and the same thing, but rather for art and teaching to operate within the same site so that knowledge(s) from both practices could agitate and critically relate to each other.

Image 9. *SALTbox* at FLΔG, 2010. Photo: Billy Tang.



## Site 3: Reflexive Praxis





If we accept the notion that there is an established body of knowledge, the question of its transmission, from a pragmatic point of view, can be subdivided into a series of questions: Who transmits learning? What is transmitted? To whom? Through what medium? In what form? With what effect?<sup>1</sup>

### 3.0 Introduction

Praxis is the process by which a theory, lesson, or skill is acted out or practiced. Praxis acknowledges that practice in a public context is somehow performative and enacted. For the critical pedagogue Paulo Freire, differentiating praxis from practice was instrumental to articulating his educational project. Freire defined praxis as action that is informed and linked to certain values.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, praxis can be understood as conscious and intentionally pursued action on the part of an individual or group. Practice can be both intentional and conscious, but it can also be framed as embodied and internalised. Returning to Schön, practice in this embodied sense can be seen to determine reflection-in-action.<sup>3</sup> Praxis, by contrast seeks out others, is dialogic and moves beyond a reflection-on-action through its concern with social value systems.

This final site, Site 3, relates to a student-led project that I initiated in order to explore how an art education project can become praxis in Freire's sense, that is to say a shared praxis between a group of students and staff. Exploring how practice can become praxis was a way to set up a shift from reflection to reflexion within the art institution. The setting up of Site 3 developed from the work undertaken in Site 1: Practice Site and in particular Site 2: Teaching Site. I had a hunch that a deliberate attempt to shift from individual practice to shared praxis could help me to further explore different kinds of reflective process, in particular, reflection *through art processes* more than through reflection as understood by for instance Brookbank and McGill, in a teaching and learning sense.<sup>4</sup> The reflexion drawn upon here is thus not the same as the kind of reflection which extends from the work of Dewey, and which is, within higher Education, usually aimed at learning, assimilating and critically evaluating a curriculum. The central project for Site 3, eventually named FLAG, however, drew upon practice and reflection as normally understood in fine art education, but aimed to extend these understandings through a research project. As this teaching as research was not assessed it could be *risky*, (meaning here uncertain and linked to chance) which is another key aspect

1 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 48.

2 Paulo Freire and Myra Bergman Ramos, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1972.

3 Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*.

4 Brookbank and McGill, *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*.

of praxis.<sup>5</sup>

Site 3 starts by considering the term ‘praxis’ and reengage with the term ‘reflexive’ before moving on the research context, which begins with the concept of indisciplinarity. It will then move on to describe the recent educational turn in the art world which is characterised by collaboration as espoused by certain theorists and curators such as Anton Vidokle. Then I will begin to unfold the FLAG project, which developed a methodology reflexively with the research. What this means regarding methodology will be explored concurrently. Site 3 will conclude with an analyses related to an event taking place after FLAG, which can be understood as reflexive of FLAG itself.

### 3.1 Context(s)

Like Site 2: Teaching Site, Site 3 was predominantly located within Chelsea College of Art and Design. Art practices encompassing individual, collective and historical practice underly this site, as do ideas around art pedagogy in the academy. Like the other sites explored in this thesis, this project, is about the purposeful creation of a site in which to explore creative research-processes. However, unlike the other sites in this thesis, it was this act of creation that brought it (and all the work associated with it) into existence, Site 3 was not an extension of ongoing existing practices the way that Art Practice and Teaching Practice sites were.

To further explore forms of reflection in relation to art practice and teaching, I wanted to move beyond my practice(s) as an artist or as a teacher, without making students objects of the research, or to fall into a default position as an educational researcher. The project, took place during the final year of the PhD research, after the teaching-as-research that the table referred to in section 2.1.2 set up. Participants for this project were self-selecting and interested in some of the larger themes feeding into it and arising from it. FLAG became an exhibition, a symposium, several small publications and last but not least, a dynamic group working productively together. FLAG was, in the end, both practice-based research and a ‘pedagogy as art’ outcome. Meaning that the process of undertaking FLAG was research *in* practice, across both teaching and art practice, following Bordorff’s classification in section 1.2. FLAG was thus the concluding project for this doctoral research, building on all the prior work and research undertaken for the doctoral study. Images of FLAG and its associated events constitute both form, content, and a tool for analysis, in an attempt to integrate practice and thesis.

Here with Site 3, the aim is to construct a particular and specific site which

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5 Carr and Kemmis, *Becoming Critical*.

intersects the practices of art-making and teaching in a direct, reflective and interactive way. In this sense, Site 3 is both a development of the method of using sites, (as we have seen in the previous practice and teaching site), and a related but distinctly separate site. In particular, I wanted to set up a project as an element of the research method, an approach which deliberately resembles certain forms of participatory action-research. However, as an approach it is also undertaken as a form of pedagogy-as-practice, thus enfolding equally to specific art practice models and research practice methods. In particular, the construction of a discursive project is key since it will allow me to set up a particular situation, here defined as a *reflexive site* that will function as a research method and as a practice outcome, for both forms of practice, teaching and art. FLAG examines the ways by which such a reflexive site can be open, collaborative and changeable in terms of content and degrees of participation.

### 3.1.1 Reflexive Praxis

For Site 3: Reflexive Praxis, praxis and reflexive are the key terms that circumscribe the research within this site. The terms inform and structure how I understood the context and how I have articulated the research. Both terms are used in a particular and specific way to set them apart from practice and reflection. This separation of practice/praxis and reflection/reflexion is problematic. Reflection/reflexion, in particular, are very closely related both as words and as concepts and as we have seen so far reflexion can be understood as simply a self-reflective form of reflection.<sup>6</sup>

Although praxis was fundamental to Friere's pedagogy (and it was here that I first came across it), it was Aristotle who first developed this term. In *The Nicomachean Ethics*, he classified disciplines as theoretical, productive or practical based on the kinds of knowledge they led to (only theoretical knowledge is 'real' knowledge for Aristotle).<sup>7</sup> The distinction is in relation to the purpose each serve. 'Praxis is informed action [...] which by reflecting on its character and consequences, reflexively changes the 'knowledge-base' which informs it. Praxis is, as such, 'doing action'.<sup>8</sup>

As reflexion is often used interchangeably to reflection, I proposed that reflexion in this thesis specifically address the critical and practical application of reflection, when it *describes how it describes*. We can see then how close this word is to praxis where action is knowingly informed by reflection. In Site 1, I found that reflexion is usually associated with certain social science methods, building on the book

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<sup>6</sup> Alvesson and Sköldbberg, *Reflexive methodology*.

<sup>7</sup> Carr and Kemmis, *Becoming Critical*.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

*Reflexive Methodology*.<sup>9</sup> However, reflexion as something which describes how it described, is what particularly interests me in relation to arts practice. No form of reflexion can be seen as entirely exclusive to art practice but art can perhaps be said to *show* how it describes as opposed to describe how it describes where the latter for me suggests a greater reliance on words and on a discursive realm. Having an art practice is a heterogenous and multifarious undertaking within which forms of reflection can be reflexive in a way that allows me to speculate that this is perhaps different to other forms of reflexion as it takes place through different and multiple kinds of language, including different forms of visual languages, thus circumventing the logocentricity of theory.

### 3.1.2 Indisciplinarity and art/educational research

It has been said that artistic research is often engaged with forms of 'boundary work', and as such it can be seen as operating across disciplines as well as in dialogue with different disciplines.<sup>10</sup> Non-discipline specific research is usually conceptualised as inter, multi or trans-disciplinary. For this research, I was looking for a model that could help me frame and understand my attempt at working both as an art and a pedagogic researcher at the same time.

I had a sense that trying to deal with research that relates to the various associated practices that operate in art and within the art school, without falling back into predefined classifications of these categories could be challenging. Understanding an evolving and negotiated methodology as being capable of rigour and indeed allowing the evolving pattern to question the ideas of rigour seem to connect purposefully with a critical art-based approach. Thus exploring notions of in-between disciplinary research, I found that Ranciere's concept of *indisciplinary* seems to offer an understanding which, in relation to this research work, circumvents some of the problems above. However, interdisciplinary is not a label but a frame for (this) research and a conceptual tool towards understanding and analysing any outcomes.

It [my work] is 'indisciplinary'. It is not only a matter of going besides the disciplines but of breaking them. My problem has always been to escape the division between disciplines, because what interests me is the question of the distribution of territories, which is always a way of deciding who is qualified to speak about what. The apportionment of disciplines refers to the more fundamental apportionment that separates those regarded as qualified to think from those regarded as unqualified;

9 Alvesson and Skoldberg, *Reflexive methodology*, 2000.

10 This notion is taken from Henk Borgdorff, who gave a presentation on the relationship between art and artistic research at the *Sensuous Knowledge 6* Conference. In the online presentation abstract he states: 'Artistic research as 'boundary work' between the art world and academia articulates in its own way who we are and where we stand'. <http://sensuousknowledge.org/2009/06/henk-borgdorff/> (accessed 19.09.11)

those who do the science and those who are regarded as its objects.<sup>11</sup>

Jacques Rancière's notion or construct of 'indisciplinary', of breaking out of disciplinary constraints, which he defines in the quote above resonates with this research and I am particularly interested in and struck by his articulation of and concerned for how disciplines and ideas around research delineate notions of who is allowed to speak, about what and how. Academic disciplines are concerned with systems of persuasion; working in a more interdisciplinary way would seem to imply an investigation of the systems of persuasion at play. The communication of knowledge and ideas for those who have not (yet) been introduced into the systems of persuasion, can be impeded as knowledge and modes of communication are so closely bound up with the system and the notion of rigour in research. The notion of indisciplinary could be one way to productively work around the problems of authority and power, within a research project that involves groups and institutions.

The FLAG project discussed in this chapter evolved from the research project at large and could not have been conceived at the outset. I was looking for an approach that, in an interdisciplinary way, would break down the barriers delineating who is allowed to speak about what within art-based educational research, and the 'forms' that these utterances may take. I wanted to see if some of these utterances could take the form of artworks or other outcomes not normally associated with educational research, since outcomes of this kind are relevant, pertinent to art students and lecturers.

### **3.2 Power and Authority**

As an artist I have found it somewhat problematic to assume the authority to speak about pedagogy and to undertake research within the field of teaching and learning, as I did not feel qualified or even allowed to do so. But this perceived problem of permission is perhaps even more pertinent in relation to the subject-object divide of the researcher and the researched within the institutional site; how do 'the researched' (for instance — the students) assume a voice, a voice of authority? FLAG was an attempt to undertake research with students, where the supposed 'object of study' would, in fact, be a researcher. I wanted to create a structure where the uneven power relations between students and teachers would

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11 'Jacques Rancière and Indisciplinary' an interview by Marie-Aude Baronian and Mireille Rosello, translated by Gregory Elliot in, *Art & Research*, vol 2, no.1, 2008, [www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/jrinterview.html](http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/jrinterview.html), (accessed 02.05.10).



be unfixed and symmetrical.<sup>12</sup>

This research, including the project FLAG, is directed to the attainment of an academic degree, a PhD.<sup>13</sup> Yet in an interdisciplinary approach there could be a re-distribution of ownership of research material and of various outcomes, and a more evenly distributed stakeholding in the project. The power dynamics between researched and researcher can this way be less fixed, more open to negotiation and transparent to those involved as well as others interested in the process. And finally this process of knowledge building and production can be harnessed for educational ends as a dynamic means of reflection. This would allow for a process of reflective articulation around knowledge construction as a joint endeavour, and could change ideas around research and articulate how the research comes back into the educational site again.

FLAG aimed towards an end point where all involved would be in an position to examine their own understanding of knowledge production in relation to their practice, and creating outcomes meaningful to them within the context of the project. In Site 1 of this thesis I discussed how I am both the subject and object in relation to my practice, and for the teaching site, Site 2, this discussion was extended into the problem of thinking about students as research subjects. In each case the solution was to use myself as the primary subject in relation to the teaching practice. The discomfort I encountered when thinking of students as 'research objects' was mitigated by regarding them also as subjects, able to freely generate and develop their own practice as artists, including in relation to this research. Thus the aim was for all involved to own this project in some capacity, perhaps not equally and not in the sense of creating an equilibrium between participants, but dynamically exploring who does what and how. The intention was to engender a generative process characterised by shifts in ownership and an ongoing redistribution of power.

### 3.3 The 'educational turn' in contemporary art

FLAG has its conceptual origins in the idea of *pedagogy as art*, one of the principles of the so called 'educational turn' in the art world. Returning to the issues introduced in Site 2, I will now explore the implications the 'turning' has for this research. I

12 For an overview of power issues in participatory socially-engaged art practice the following have written extensively around this area. Clare Bishop, 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics'. *October* 110 (10) Fall 2004: pp. 51-79, Grant H Kester, *Conversation Pieces — Community and Communication in Modern Art* Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004. Dave Beech, 'Include me out!' in *Art Monthly*, April 2008, Issue 315, pp.1-4.

13 I was, and am still, employed as an Associate Lecturer at the University of the Arts, London and thus have a different relationship to the institution than the other (mostly BA) students involved in this project do.

start from the presumption and belief that this turn is important not only for teaching and learning in the art educational institution, but also for a notion of 'indisciplinary research', due to its inherent reliance on participation and the building of knowledge in common. The FLAG project, interdisciplinary research and the educational turn can be seen to share a number of concerns: active participation and common knowledge building, and a concern for open, reflexive and recursive processes. However, there are differences: works seen as fitting into the parameters of the educational turn have an ongoing temporality whereas this doctoral research, is in part outcome-orientated (with a thesis) in way that the educational turn itself is not.

'The 'educational turn' [...] has begun to change how it is possible for artist-teachers to conceive of, and discuss, the practice-teaching relationship'.<sup>14</sup> This quote frames why I will look closely at two projects that are seen as *pedagogy as art*, and as being particularly symptomatic of the educational turn. However, the notion of the educational turn itself, it has to be acknowledged, is problematic. There is no agreed definition of what it consists of and no consensus in the literature already written on the subject, of what it might mean.<sup>15</sup> In addition, there are very different ways that pedagogy as art operates. Andrea Philips notes that some work undertaken under this schema is predominantly an aesthetisising of pedagogy, and engaged with pedagogy as form rather than as content.<sup>16</sup> Kristina Lee Podesva has usefully outlined ten concerns shared by work which can be seen as emblematic of the educational turn.

1. A school structure that operates as a social medium.
2. A dependence on collaborative production.
3. A tendency toward process (versus object) based production.
4. An aleatory or open nature.
5. An ongoing and potentially endless temporality.
6. A free space for learning.
7. A post-hierarchical learning environment where there are no teachers, just co-participants.
8. A preference for exploratory, experimental, and multi-disciplinary approaches to knowledge production.
9. An awareness of the instrumentalization of the academy.
10. A virtual space for the communication and distribution of ideas.<sup>17</sup>

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14 Rebecca Fortnum and Katrine Hjelde, 'Fine Art's educational turn', *Dialogues in Art And Design — Promoting and Sharing Excellence*, GLAD, 2009, p. 79.

15 'the credibility, significance and critical currency of the proposed turn is disputed', Paul O'Neill & Mick Wilson, (eds.), *Curating and the Educational turn*, London: Open Editions, 2010 p. 12.

16 Dr. Andrea Philips, Assistant Director of the MA in Curating at Goldsmiths and also the Director of Curating Architecture at Goldsmiths College, in the *Nought to Sixty Salon Discussion*: 'You Talkin' to me? Why is art turning to education' ICA, 14 July, 2008.

17 Kristina Lee Podesva, 'A Pedagogical Turn: Brief Notes on Education as Art', *Fillip* 6, Summer 2007, <http://fillip.ca./content/a-pedagogical-turn>, (accessed 01.04.10).

This 'turning' can be seen as providing a productive avenue for rethinking the relationship between practice and teaching. Considering Alison Shreeve's 5 categories of tutors' experience of practice and teaching in art (and design), we see that the notion of teaching in all examples is determined by the hierarchy of student/tutor.<sup>18</sup> Shreeve's fifth category, the integrating category seems to include practitioners who do not separate between their practice and their teaching, instead treating them as one and the same thing. Pedagogy as art fits into this format, and this is probably an accurate description of some artist practitioners who in some way align their work to pedagogy as art. This seems to be closely linked to Joseph Beuy's conception of teaching as his greatest work of art, a conception that perhaps leaves little room for the student and their practice.<sup>19</sup> The educational turn, for all its problems, potentially allows for the student's practice(s) to enter into the teaching and learning equation where this can become art. Its relational and participatory mode, in a sense, removes the onus away from the tutor and their practice, providing a different perspective from which to view practice and knowledge production within the academy.

I will briefly discuss two often cited projects that in different ways have paved the way for the proliferation of practices that are now gathered under the banner of the educational turn. These examples do not, however, illustrate the full breadth of practices subsumed under this umbrella. They do demonstrate the formation of very particular discursive sites in Kwon's terms, and point to the origin of FLΔG as a platform for teaching, learning and arts practice.

The Copenhagen Free University was set up by Henriette Heise and Jakob Jakobsen in their home, in May 2001.

The Free University is an artist run institution dedicated to the production of critical consciousness and poetic language. We do not accept the so-called new knowledge economy as the framing understanding of knowledge. We work with forms of knowledge that are fleeting, fluid, schizophrenic, uncompromising, subjective, uneconomic, acapitalist, produced in the kitchen, produced when asleep or arisen on a social excursion — collectively.<sup>20</sup>

Copenhagen Free University (CFU) was thus an artist initiated and run project where the notion of a 'university' was adopted as a particular kind of discursive site within which they could explore issues of knowledge production, power, and capitalism,

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<sup>18</sup> Shreeve, *Transitions*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>19</sup> 'To be a teacher is my greatest work of art', Beuys in conversation with Willoughby Sharp, *Artforum*, no. 4 (1969), p. 44.

<sup>20</sup> Copenhagen Free University website, <http://www.copenhagenfreeuniversity.dk/index1.html>, (accessed 25.10.08).

through participatory events. These ranged from reading groups to screenings at the University (in reality, their small flat where they also lived and raised their child). Maria Lind has characterised this setting up of pseudo-institutions as forming a fourth wave of institutional critique, with this kind of speculative gesture being seen as a way to question wide ranging issues around the working structures of art and its economic conditions.<sup>21</sup>

As an experiment the CFU was utopian, experimental and practical. It was an attempt to transfer the emancipatory potential of education to the everyday, through self-organisation and grass-root engagement. The CFU existed for 6 years and during this time it engaged with five fields of research: feminist organisation, art and economy, escape subjectivity, television/media activism and art history. The university 'site' (as I would call it) was declared through a 'speech act', because although there was a physical site (their flat), it was the discursive site of a free university that mattered. Becoming a site enabled the exploration of issues around the working conditions of art and artists in a way that went way beyond the actual site of their flat, but also beyond the 'site' of the university.<sup>22</sup>

The artist and curator Anton Vidokle is perhaps most closely associated with the educational turn through (initially) the failed Manifesta 6. The Manifesta 6 curators proposed that this biennale should operate as a temporary school in the divided city of Nicosia in Cyprus.<sup>23</sup> The project, co-curated by Anton Vidokle, Mai Abu El Dahab and Florian Waldvogel (whose idea it was to structure Manifesta as a school) failed due to disagreements with the authorities in the Greek and Turkish parts of Nicosia. Vidokle went on to develop Unitednationsplaza based on the blueprint for the two year research process undertaken for Manifesta 6. Vidokle wanted to develop a model for an art institution not centred on the idea of a display, but find a more flexible form of 'exhibition'. For Vidokle this was linked to his belief that a truly critical art audience does not currently exist.

While it is still possible to produce a critical art object, there seems to be no public out there that can complete its transformative function, possibly rendering the very premise behind contemporary art practice effectively futile or, at the very least, severely reducing its agency.<sup>24</sup>

21 Maria Lind, 'When Water is Gushing In', in *I Can't Work Like This, Printed Project Issue 6*, Anton Vidokle and Tirdad Zolghadr (eds.), VAI:Dublin, 2006.

22 By 'speech act' I mean the philosophical notion of 'saying so makes it so' in speech act theory. An event that can be rescinded later, which was in the case of Copenhagen Free University who ceased to exist with another speech act 'we have won'.

23 Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, Nicosia, (also known as Lefkosia) is the only divided capital city in the world. A demilitarized zone under the control of United Nations, divides the city into Turkish and Greek parts. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, declared in 1983 in the northern part of the island, is only recognised by Turkey.

24 Anton Vidokle, 'From Exhibition to School: Notes from Unitednationsplaza' in Madoff, Henry, (ed.), *Art School*, London: MIT Press, 2009.

Unitednationsplaza was 'Exhibition as school', developed in order to foster this 'missing' critical art audience. The project ran for a year in Berlin and consisted of seminars, screenings, book presentations, workshops etc.<sup>25</sup> After Berlin, the project moved first to Mexico city and then to New York.<sup>26</sup> This project, at least on paper, seem to fit most of Podeva's categories for defining pedagogy as art.

The examples of Copenhagen Free University and unitednationsplaza were chosen because they illustrate some of the aspects of the educational turn that for me set up new questions for the art academy, particularly in relation to research. To recap, these projects in different ways set up reflexive sites and are examples of Miwon Kwon's discursive site category. Both these projects were rooted in physical places but they, more importantly, deal with pedagogy itself as a discursive site. As Miwon Kwon has described, the use of dematerialised mediums, such as lectures, classes and discussions prompted a shift from site-specific art-making, in which a particular physical space was the paramount concern, to a subset of practices that expand the notion of site to include its sociological frames, institutional contexts, and economic and political pressures.<sup>27</sup> The educational turn is perhaps the most developed example of a discursive site. Furthermore, as this turning has garnered increasing critical attention, this educational turn in itself becomes a site, even if this turning is, as Hassan Khan has claimed in his essay *A Simple Turn: Notes on an Argument*, just 'one that the art industry demands with predictable regularity every couple of years', thus to be superseded by another 'turn'.<sup>28</sup> For art education and pedagogic research the implications are, I believe, of more durable value. For instance, pedagogy as art allows both students and staff to claim the pedagogic functions, engagement and interaction, as their art. With respect to educational research, the educational turn has highlighted an emphasis on process versus outcome and raised important questions regarding who or what the research is for.

### 3.4 'Turning Educational' at Chelsea

Taking a lead from the educational turn, I proceeded to develop and run a research

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25 *unitednationsplaza* was a project by Anton Vidokle in collaboration with Boris Groys, Jalal Toufic, Liam Gillick, Martha Rosler, Natascha Sadr Haghghian, Nikolaus Hirsch, Tirdad Zolghadr and Walid Raad. Thus as a project it mirrored the collaborative processes of the events and programme. It ran for a year from October 2006 to October 2007. See the *unitednationsplaza* archive, <http://www.unitednationsplaza.org/>, (19.11.11).

26 *unitednationsplaza* Mexico DF, in Casa Refugio, ran for one month in Mexico City, 1 March - 31 March 2008. Night School in New Museum (Bowery; New York) ran for one year, January 2008 - February 2009. See the *unitednationsplaza* archive, <http://www.unitednationsplaza.org/>, (19.11.11).

27 Miwon Kwon, 'One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity', in *October*, vol. 80, Spring, 1997, p. 91.

28 Hassan Khan, 'A Simple Turn: Notes on an Argument', in Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson (eds.), *Curating and the Educational turn*, London: Open Editions, 2010, p. 119.

project in conjunction with students on the BA Fine Art course at Chelsea.<sup>29</sup> This project came to be known as FLΔG. The educational turn was thus harnessed as a method and as a frame of reference towards making a participatory, interdisciplinary, collaborative research project with a group of students.

As the educational turn has taken place almost exclusively outside of the educational institution, FLΔG aimed to explore the potential for this form of practice/praxis within the art institution.<sup>30</sup> I was interested in facilitating a situation where a group of students would have a collective opportunity to either consider their existing practice in relation to this 'turning' or to explore different ways of working in relation to pedagogy as art, through making art works, writing, discussion/dialogue, a reading group, and collaboration.

### 3.5 Ethical Dimension

As discussed in Site 2, (section 2.1.1), the ethical considerations related to any educational research undertaking, including a project of this kind, are manifold. FLΔG, however, avoided most of the teaching specific ethical problems because the project was not constructed as teaching in a curriculum-related sense of the word. That is to say, there was no summative or formative assessment of the students undertaken in this project. Furthermore, for the academic year 09/10, I did not undertake any assessment-related teaching at Chelsea, confining my teaching instead to 1 to 1 tutorials, a lecture and theory seminars.<sup>31</sup> How this project was recorded and interpreted was negotiated in discussions by all involved. I asked for permission from the group to use material towards completing the thesis and we agreed that all participants could equally use or utilise the material from the project for their own ends, as such the material will be owned by no one. Examples of how various participants made use of this liberty will be described as the project is narrated.

Members of FLΔG are here referred to by their first name, the core members are fully listed in acknowledgements on page 11. I refer to all exhibitors from the BA Fine Art by first name. FLΔG symposium speakers are referred to by full name, because they were invited and referred to in this way in the programme texts.

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29 Irit Rogoff has explored the coining of the term 'educational turn' in the art world based on exhibitions and events like A.C.A.D.E.M.Y, the failed Manifesta 6, unitednationsplaza, Documenta 12, and Summit Kein. Now often referred to as 'turning' — not dissimilar to the way turning is used, for instance, as 'participatory turn' or 'curatorial turn'. Irit Rogoff, 'Turning', *e-flux*, 0 (11/08) 2008, [www.e-flux.com/journal/view/18](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/18), (accessed 15.06.09)

30 There are some exceptions to this, for instance *Colourschool* in Canada, <http://colourschool.org>, (accessed 10.06.11), and *Future Academy* see, <http://www.futureacademy.info/>, (accessed 19.10.11).

31 I did double mark some stage 3 thesis, but as a 'second marker'.



### 3.6 Methodology — the cake method

For this project the working method also had to be negotiated, e.g., in terms of how FLAG should be undertaken and documented. This is in line with the reflexive, evolving methodology of research which is consistent with an interdisciplinary approach. FLAG was an event as well as a process and unfolding project. It can be seen as discursive, relational, material, and temporal, all at once. The text-practice relationship takes on an interesting dynamic within this part of the thesis. In part, the praxis evolved from FLAG is textual or immaterial, in a way that lends itself to description in a text. However, there are aspects of the material, relational and temporal dimensions developed through FLAG that need a different approach. For Site 3, images are specifically employed to conjure up a sense of the material, relational and temporal aspects of this project. They are not intended as illustrations that amplify what is describable, but as data (to use a positivist term), or as a representation of practice. All documents, (including this thesis) rely on aspects like font and spatial relationships and on form of prose to communicate with their readers but images and non-text based elements add another dimension to the text.<sup>32</sup>

The project FLAG can be understood as a method as well as an outcome, but as it only took shape (and became FLAG) half way through the last year of this doctoral research, I think for the purpose of clarity, I will attempt to differentiate (as far as that is possible) between FLAG as method and FLAG as an outcome. I will do this by outlining the methods used under the umbrella idea of *cake methodology*.

The cake methodology developed from meeting regularly whilst sharing biscuits and cakes. The idea of coming together around food and how this structured our work and interactions led us to provide cakes at events we hosted, or later, participated in. After a while we began to see that a set of methods were emerging and we began to call it 'Cake Methodology'. We became more ambitious regarding

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32 In their paper, *A taxonomy of relationships between images and text*, Emily E. Marsh and Marilyn Domas White outline three main categories of text image interrelationships

- A) Functions expressing little relation to the text
- B) Functions expressing close relation to the text
- C) Functions that go beyond the text

For category A this may include image as decoration. For category B this includes relating to and reiterating the text. For the final category C, the emphasis is on images as tools for interpretation, development and transformation. And although images in this chapter at times will reiterate or even decorate, their main function is to go beyond the text, to provide another dimension of communication; they do not simply illustrate or expose practice, but in some senses *are* the practice. This process plays midwife to a blurring between the thesis as text and material practice. Emily E. Marsh and Marilyn Domas White, 'A taxonomy of relationships between images and text', *Journal of Documentation*, vol. 59, issue 6, 2003, p. 653, <http://csis.pace.edu/~marchese/TextImage/image-text-taxonomy.pdf>, (accessed 16.06.11).



the making of the cakes, and the cakes became significant in themselves. We used cakes with particular kinds of colouring (pink/yellow icing = FLAG colours) particular associations (retro – Battenberg, English – Victoria Sponge). We became further influenced by *the Emely* and Rosalie's use of home made scones.<sup>33</sup> There is a very strong association here with relational aesthetic practices, such as that of Rirkrit Tiravanija, whose installations of the 1990's often involved cooking meals for gallery visitors. Tiravanija has been consistently championed by Nicolas Bourriaud, who coined the term relational aesthetics in the book by the same name. Conviviality was not our main prerogative, and from the beginning we were concerned that a convivial element might work against modes of criticality, bearing in mind Clare Bishop's critique of relational aesthetics, which she sees as privileging function over form and open-endedness over resolution.<sup>34</sup> Stephen Wright has described relational aesthetics as facilitating 'frivolous interaction' and the children's party associations that cakes suggest could indicate precisely this kind of situation.<sup>35</sup> And although we were not aware of this initially, I think we were attracted to the 'silly' aspects of serving and eating cake, as a way to almost parody any cosy associations that this kind of collaboration or relational event suggests. Although cakes have a particular kind of feel-good resonance, the cake methodology for us became a means of undermining hierarchical structures. For instance, within the group formed, cake-baking skills were not distributed according to familiar hierarchies (student, staff, young, older, gender stereotypes etc.). We had no rules regarding the baking, but we tacitly agreed that although kitsch decoration and retro cake types was desirable as a form of cake aesthetics, the taste of the cake was even more important. Not all members baked, it was limited to members who had the practical opportunity and the skills and the interest. Non-commitment to baking did not exclude anyone from taking part in FLAG meetings or events. However, several members who had never really baked before decided to start baking. The cake methodology was not entirely reliant on baking even though this became a stronger feature as the work progressed. For some members whose own practice is highly discursive and immaterial it became a way to make, to create something physical. Some would claim the baking and cakes as art. My primary interest is in the cakes as something that could be harnessed as part of an artistic practice and process, towards an emerging understanding of the different ways artistic process, from research to outcome, could operate. In the more participatory events, like

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33 One of the participants in FLAG, Rosalie Schweiker, uses cakes and play with an 'aesthetics' of cakes too, so we are not unique in our interest in making and sharing cakes. See, <http://emely.wikispaces.com>, (accessed 26.10.11).

34 See Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, for a framing of relational aesthetics and Claire Bishop, 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics', *October* 110, Fall 2004, (10):51-79, for a critique.

35 Stephen Wright, 'The Delicate Essence of Artistic Collaboration', in *Third Text*, no. 18, November 2004, pp. 533-554.

FLAG itself, the cakes also had a levelling effect that became increasingly apparent. As one core group member said, 'it is difficult to be pretentious or pull rank whilst eating home made cake'.

The FLAG cake methodology can be described as:

- Relational: Fostering relationships
- Co-owned: Developed between all those involved
- Participatory: Relied on participants in various ways at different stages
- Reflexive: Self critical and developing as project developed
- Praxis orientated: In Freire's sense, as enacted practice

Through the project FLAG, I hoped to discover something about the nature of reflection, more specifically about artistic reflection within groups. In Site 1 of this thesis, I outlined key ideas and histories around reflection relating to this project and described a move from a private individually-based form of artistic reflection towards group reflexion as developed with Future Reflections Research Group. Site 2 looked at forms of reflection desired by the art educational institution. Through FLAG, using the cake methodology, I then further explored how artists reflect when working together. The project developed out of a sense of the limitations within existing modes of reflection on production. I sought to enable a process by which reflection could become reflexion, moving from an individuals practice into shared praxis.

The methods described here were transparent to the members of FLAG, and generatively productive both for the undertaking of the project but also as a way to retrospectively and reflexively make sense of our evolving praxis as in some sense knowledge forming.<sup>36</sup>

### 3.7 FLAG

At the start of the autumn term 2009, I advertised the proposed project, which was initially called 'turning educational' to second and third year students at the stage meetings and I put up information on notice boards and on the UAL BlackBoard (virtual learning environment).

*'What: An opportunity for Fine Art students to take part in and develop an art/research project at Chelsea, aiming for outcomes like exhibition, publication or other event. The starting point for this project workshop is the so-called 'educational turn' in the art-world. This 'educational turn', (as seen with exhibitions/events like Unitednationsplaza, Documenta*

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<sup>36</sup> Mika Hannula, Juha Souranta, and Tere Vadén, *Artistic Research - theories, methods and practices*, Espoo Academy of Fine Art Helsinki and University of Gothenburg, 2005.

12, and Night School-New Museum) has been turning away from the art educational institutions and towards the art-world. This project returns the exploration of art and pedagogy to the educational site, in this case Chelsea, as a venture between students in dialogue with each other and the institution. Aiming to critically build on this 'educational turn' as it is found in the contemporary art world, exploring how artist and curators claim forms of pedagogic engagement as their practice, and bring this enquiry back into the art school

In this art/research project the participating students share ownership of the goals, processes and outcome of the art and research. A group of students will have a collective opportunity to either consider their existing practice in relation to this 'turning' or to explore different ways of working in relation to pedagogy as art, individually or as a group. Through, workshops, writing, discussion/dialogue, reading group, collaboration or other ways of making art works.

*Who:* This project is for stage 2+3 students and is organised by Katrine Hjelde.

*Where:* Project to run during Autumn term 09. Preliminary information meeting Wednesday 7th of October in Blue room BG01A 12.00. Frequency and place(s) of meeting to be decided at this point, potential for some outcomes to be finalised next term.

*Outcomes:* Could include but not be limited to: exhibition, publication, event, and/or symposium. This is to be decided by participating students. Triangle gallery has been booked for this project and could be venue for exhibition, symposium or other kind of event.

Sign up with email, stage and mobile to declare interest or come to information meeting.<sup>37</sup>

At the initial meeting a large number of students attended. As we talked it became clear that not all were planning on participating, but had come along out of curiosity. A core group of 5-6 formed from this initial meeting and from then on the project was no longer just mine, rooted in my research interest, but a shared venture encompassing many other interests and ideas. To borrow from Maria Lind, the project went from being a 'single collaboration' where an artist's idea is realised with the help of others to a 'double collaboration' where,

collaboration takes place both in the formulation of the idea on the part of the author, but also in the realization of the work. The idea is developed together with others, who are awarded the same status as the author, and who also all participate in the execution of the project.<sup>38</sup>

At the next meeting we discussed how to proceed and agreed that we would meet once a week, on a Tuesday at lunchtime, and that we would bring our lunches and have biscuits to share.<sup>39</sup> The venue would be a room called the blue room, a 'student owned' communal work place and social space. However, since it was the students' space, they had to organise anything that took place there, as I was

37 Call out for 'turning educational'.

38 Maria Lind 'The Collaborative Turn' in Johanna Billing, Maria Lind, and Lars Nilsson, *Taking the matter into common hands*, London: Black Dog, 2007.

39 The cake methodology grew out of this way of coming together.

not allowed to book this space. Consequently the physical site for this initial part of the undertaking became one that I had no control over. This was not planned at the outset, but helped to encourage the sense that the project was jointly owned.

The first few sessions were spent discussing what 'turning educational' could be or mean for those involved. These were, in part, frustrating meetings where no one agreed. In addition, the second and the third year students were thinking and operating with very different time frames. The third years were initially keen to do something quickly and wrap up the project before Christmas. The second years on the other hand wanted to postpone any kind of project until after Christmas, a point where the third year students would be entrenched in thesis and degree show preparation.

What turned out to be a serious and unexpected obstacle, however, was a sense that, as the initiator of the project, I did not match their expectations of what an initiator does. Since I wanted this project to be student-led, I tried to be hands-off with respect to the project and where it should be going. This issue led to the project almost breaking down. Several students began to temporarily or permanently remove themselves from the project. I was forced to consider what to do about this situation: how was this project going to move forward whilst retaining the idea of a jointly-led venture. I was surprised that my attempt to break down existing institutional hierarchical structures were perceived with frustration by most of the students involved. Below, I will describe what happened next and how a particular model of reflective practise, was put in place or, rather reflexively deployed, as a way to lead the project forward (here I mean practice in an extended artistic sense, a sense that also includes art, research and teaching practice).<sup>40</sup>

My desire for the students to take charge of the project was perceived almost as not taking responsibility, deferring decisions, not being willing to put in 'the work'. I thus had to try and find a way to work with this difficult situation, which had arisen out of my ideas of student-led research and learning, as well as theories around collaborative art practice. To me, it seemed that I was offering a shared, student-led venture, which was being misunderstood and rejected. Reflecting on the power relation situation, I realised I had to accept the role of the initiator of the project since although I am a (PhD) student, I am also a tutor, and that this is something that cannot be avoided. Thus, I began to propose some fairly concrete projects and time frames. For instance, I proposed using the Triangle Space at Chelsea College of Art and Design for some kind of event, as I had pre-booked

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40 For instance, as outlined by Anne Brookbank and Ian McGill in *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, 2nd Edition, SRHE and Open University Press, 2007.

it at the time of conceiving the project.<sup>41</sup> Another was to work in some other way outside of Chelsea, drawing on my own arts practice and research contacts.

In a way, I was modelling a stance of action and responsibility, demonstrating forms of practice in action. This was much closer to the way I worked with Future Reflections than typical student-centred teaching. In FR we tried to enact practice through performances and performative writing, putting (our individual and joint) practice up front. It seemed that by taking more 'control' the students felt enabled to take control over the project too. Thus this act was not because I wanted control but because I wanted to show what control and responsibility could 'look like' in this project. As a result the project went from virtual collapse, with notable student withdrawal and disinterest, to re-engagement and new recruits. Now the students involved did begin to take control of the project and there was also a recognition, forming within the group, that the frustrating early meetings where we discussed the ins and outs, problems and possibilities, had actually been of significant value. My experience of collaborative work with Future Reflections, as discussed in Chapter 2, had taught me that such processes are often necessary in order to establish common ground.

After Christmas the project was re-advertised on the Chelsea BlackBoard and on notice boards. This led to more students joining, including some students who had previously stated that they did not have time for the project or that it was not for them, despite being interested in the area of art pedagogy. Thus after the initial initiative by me, the students were now more fully involved in the project and my role became more administrative, (for example sending group emails, keeping track of schedules and work schemes and related administrative tasks). This was not a 'neutral' role. I was conscious that this role within a group has the power to shape events both as they happen and also retrospectively through archival control.

Another PhD student, Michaela, joined the project at this point too.<sup>42</sup> Michaela also teaches, but not at Chelsea, so was not seen as a tutor figure in the way that I sometimes was. This created a better sense of us all being, in one sense, students (PhD and BA students together).

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41 In any case a decision needed to be made regarding this space because otherwise I had to hand it back to the space manager at Chelsea College of Art and Design for others to book.

42 Michaela Ross and I both received PhD studentship funding from CLIP CETL at Chelsea. Michaela is an artist and teacher who works mainly within museums as an artist educator, which is a very interesting and useful counterpoint to my practice within the art educational institution. She does not teach at Chelsea.



Image 10-22. Lucy Dixon's Screens, Jack Burton and Janina Lange furniture, RosalieSchweiker The Emely residency application station.



### 3.8 FLAG evolves

Part of the idea at this point was that FLAG would enable us to participate on Critical Practice, a research group working on Chelsea's ambitious Parade Project in May 2010. Parade focused on 'public modes of assembly and forms of address'.<sup>43</sup> Taking part in Parade was consistent with my suggestion to use our event, FLAG, as a starting point for engagement with other events, but the idea to propose an event for Parade was not mine and I did not intervene to drive this process forward. FLAG was shaping into an engaging interdisciplinary platform, an ongoing discursive site and as a set of rolling activities that would enable us to contribute to a major project like Parade. For Parade's ambitious Market of Ideas, we decided to propose a stall centred on pedagogy and the art school.

FLAG was initially conceived as a week long event but we then discovered that the Hayward Gallery was holding a conference on art and pedagogy called 'Deschooling Society' on the Thursday and Friday of the very same week. We decided to concentrate our efforts into the first half of the week, Monday to Wednesday, and to attend the Deschooling Society conference as a group after the FLAG event.<sup>44</sup> We also made contact with the conference organiser in hope of initiating some kind of cross-over, but, although they were interested, in principle, they could not accommodate the idea in practice. Most of those involved in FLAG, however, booked tickets for the conference. At first we were very worried about the close timing of 'Deschooling Society' and our FLAG event, but this coincidence energised the group as it emphasised the importance of the work that we were

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43 Critical Practice is a research group with links to Chelsea College of Art and Design. Founding members include Professor Neil Cummings, PhD students involved include Michaela Ross, and Marsha Bradfield (from Future Reflection). See Critical Practice wiki for full description and analysis of the parade project and general information regarding this research group. [http://criticalpracticechelsea.org/wiki/index.php?title=Public\\_Space](http://criticalpracticechelsea.org/wiki/index.php?title=Public_Space), (accessed 20.11.11).

44 Deschooling Society Conference, Purcell Room- Southbank centre, London, 29-30 April 2010. From the website: 'This two-day conference brings together international artists, curators, and writers to discuss and debate the changing relationship between art and education. Deschooling Society takes its title from Ivan Illich's seminal 1971 book, one of the most influential radical critiques of the education system in Western countries. Issues at the heart of that critique have been increasingly debated within the art world in recent years, and the subject of education has attracted renewed attention from artists, curators, and collectives. Pedagogical models are currently being explored, re-imagined and deployed by practitioners from around the world in highly diverse projects comprising laboratories, discursive platforms, temporary schools, participatory workshops and libraries. Simultaneously, progressive globalisation has led to a revaluing of the collective knowledge and agency of local communities. Speakers have been invited to present critical ideas on collective and participatory practice, pedagogical experiments and how such art can be understood and discussed.' <http://thehayward.southbankcentre.co.uk/2010/04/22/deschooling-society/>, (accessed 01.08.11).



doing, making the group feel that we were also potentially contributing to this field.

Some of the third year students involved in FLΔG had meanwhile approached a group of stage one students who already operated as a loose group called SALT, (which centred around the making and dissemination of publications).<sup>45</sup> SALT thus became involved with FLΔG, and from initially being involved just with the idea of making two small publications for FLΔG, some of the SALT students became full participants in FLΔG itself. We now had no restrictions on joining: any student, any stage/level was welcomed.<sup>46</sup> We did not get students from other courses involved however.

As our ambitions for FLΔG grew we decided to apply for further funding. Michaela Ross and I were eligible to apply to CCW AGENDA's funding as PhD students.<sup>47</sup> Funds exist to enable collaboration between Chelsea, Camberwell, Wimbledon and outside agencies. With this in mind, we also approached The Showroom Gallery in London because the gallery ran a project called the Knowledge programme, and we were all interested in how art institutions, like galleries, can form knowledge, particularly in relation to ideas around pedagogy and community-based arts practices.<sup>48</sup> CCW funding enabled us to get the Director Emily Pethick and Communal Knowledge programme coordinator Rehana Zaman on board as speakers for the symposium aspect of FLΔG. In addition, we obtained funding from CLIP CETL for the increasingly ambitious work students were planning for FLΔG in the Triangle Gallery, for refreshments, and an opening/evening event of some kind. We now found ourselves in a situation where we could think more expansively about the scale and quality of the project.

We had decided that FLΔG should be, in part, an exhibition of works that centred loosely around the idea of art as pedagogy or pedagogy as art.<sup>49</sup> We sent out

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45 SALT website, <http://saltchelsea.com/>, (accessed 24.09.11).

46 The initial restriction to stage 2 and 3 was that students at this point have begun to think about what it means to learn and what knowledge is in earnest, and are in a good position to consider the art school as a place to gain particular forms of knowledge.

47 EXTERNAL AGENDAS 2010. This application form is solely for CCW Staff and PhD students who wish to run external Agendas events in Summer Term 2010. These events must be run in collaboration with another institution (eg. gallery, museum, academic institution) outside UAL. Money is available for speakers fees, travel costs, publicity etc. to a maximum of £1000 per event. There is no money available for the hire of venues.

48 For more information on The Knowledge Project at The Showroom see, <http://www.theshowroom.org/local.html?id=47>, (accessed 19.10.11).

49 Art as pedagogy is the idea that aspects of artistic practice can be used towards teaching and learning encounters in education more generally. The possibility of self-creation through artistic means underlie some museum education programs and artist in residence projects in schools. As FLΔG we were primarily interested in ideas around pedagogy as art, but we were also interested in how the two notions can interrelate in practice.

an open call to artists who had not previously been part of the group to exhibit in the exhibition. We also decided to have a symposium with invited speakers from inside and outside of Chelsea College, CCW and UAL. We spent a long time discussing who to invite and why. This was very much a student-led process since the group had, at this point, very clear ideas of who to invite. In fact, several speakers I suggested were rejected.

The invitation process was shared between the group, with most students taking responsibility for inviting one or more speakers. Again, I kept on top of the administration. The response was very good and almost all those asked accepted.<sup>50</sup> But we had a very strong list of participants for the symposium including several student speakers, and a speaker who also contributed to the Deschooling Society conference later in the week.

The call-out for the FLΔG exhibition went out as an *open call* and we received a number of very considered responses. Almost all these were incorporated into the exhibition. Furthermore, some of the students invited others whose work was thought relevant. At the same time a call out was sent from SALT to encourage participation in the SALT FLΔG issues.

SALT Magazine is a publication created by a group of first years at Chelsea, which focuses on exchanging ideas and displaying artworks in an alternative context. It is cheaply made and lo-fi in nature, which makes it free to distribute.

Creating an extra dimension to promote discussion and exchange between people is one of the main interests of SALT magazine. As a result, on the morning of Wednesday 28th April, SALT are putting on an event, 'SALTbox', in the Triangle Space as part of FLΔG.

'FLΔG: Re-Turning the Educational Turn' is a workshop/symposium/exhibition taking place in the Triangle Space on Tuesday 27th and Wednesday 28th April 2010. The project aims to return discussion of 'the educational turn' (the exhibitions, symposiums, and artists' practises which take pedagogy and knowledge exchange as their basis) to the educational site itself.

'SALTbox' will be constructed as a live issue of the magazine, focusing on performance and discussion based work, allowing pieces which do not lend themselves to our regular two-dimensional format to be presented to an audience. As a way of echoing the way that the printed magazine is essentially tactile in nature, 'SALTbox' will revolve around a central prop, such as a box to sit in, which could invert the idea of a podium and challenge the conventional set up of a discussion with a speaker and an audience. It would also act as a support structure to formally underline and link all of the work. What this central prop will be is currently undecided, so suggestions and ideas are welcome!

If you have a performance, a piece of participatory work or simply something you would like to discuss, we would like to hear from you!

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<sup>50</sup> A few had to pull out again due to other work commitments, and the ash cloud emitted by Eyjafjallajökull Volcano in Iceland halted air travel in and out of Europe.

Just like with the printed issues of SALT, we are keeping the guidelines as to what people can submit as loose as possible. The topic of the work is completely up to you; it could be related to the themes of education and pedagogy that the symposium is exploring, or it could be something completely different, anything that you are interested in and would like to share with others.

If you would like to get involved, please submit a brief description of the work/discussion you have in mind, and how long it will last (preferably up to 30 minutes), to salt.chelsea@gmail.com, and we can begin to construct the event. If you have any questions or would like more information about the event, please send an email to the same address! The deadline for submissions is Sunday 25th April. We look forward to hearing from you! SALT.<sup>51</sup>

This invitation from SALT was also extended to all the speakers and exhibitors at FLAG. SALT proposed to run a live version of their magazine in the mornings, (which they called SALTbox). This way, FLAG got a full programme for both mornings. Interestingly some of those speaking at FLAG also put in a proposal for SALTbox. It seemed that there was a clear perception of SALTbox as being very different, more informal, entirely student-led, and somewhat ad-hoc in a way that could be seen to reflect the symposium itself, as it largely mimicked its format, but also questioned it.

### 3.9 FLAG Week

I have called the following sections FLAG week to both narrate FLAG as an event, but also to discuss the articulation of the space (the Triangle Gallery), the exhibition within it, the symposium, the SALT FLAG and other elements related to FLAG but which extend in time from the two days 'proper' of FLAG — the event.

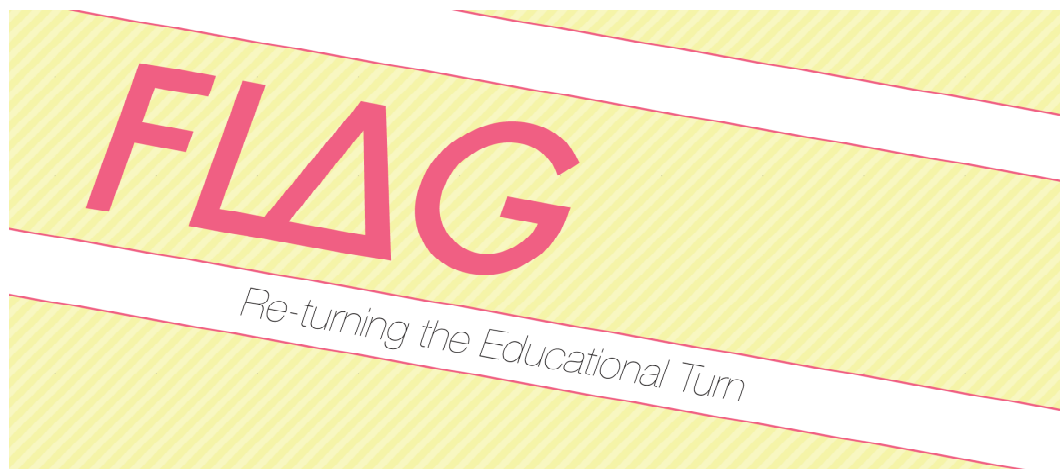
#### 3.9.1 The Triangle Gallery

One of the very interesting aspects of FLAG was how we, as a group, engaged with aspects of the Triangle gallery space to build an environment for the exhibition (see overleaf). Lucy, one of the exhibiting students, wanted to create a number of transparent screens for the space, which would interact with each other and work with the Triangle space itself. The gallery is a particularly difficult space to work with as it is large, triangular, and industrial looking with cinder block walls.

The gallery is one of the few spaces at Chelsea that the general public has access to. It operates as an educational space, a space for student shows (like fine art interim exhibitions and degree shows) and always as an open public space. It is linked through a pathway to the parade ground, the fully public space of Chelsea. The Triangle gallery is also adjacent to Tate Britain and we were interested in

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<sup>51</sup> 'SALTbox' call out.



## FLAG PROGRAMME

### 27th

#### 10.30 Exhibition opens

Works from a variety of artist responding to the educational turn are presented to the public, framing the ensuing events and talks.

#### 10.30 -12.30 SALTbox I

Saltbox will be constructed as a live issue of the lo-fi student publication of the same name. Focusing on performance and discussion based work, it will allow pieces which do not lend themselves to the regular two-dimensional format to be presented to an audience.

#### 2 - 5.30 Symposium day one

The two afternoons aim to discuss a range of presentations from artist, students and pedagogues focusing on the educational turn.

#### Speakers:

Dennis Atkinson  
Linda Drew  
FLAG  
Ana Laura Lopez de la Torre  
Rebecca Fortnum  
Emily Pethick

#### 5.30 - 8 FLAG Launch Party

### 28th

#### 10.30 - 12.30 SALTbox II

#### 2 - 5.30 Symposium day two

The second half of the symposium continues the discussions from the day before and introduces five new speakers:

#### Speakers:

Chloe Briggs  
Neil Cummings  
FLAG  
Malcom Quinn  
Terry Smith  
Rehana Zaman

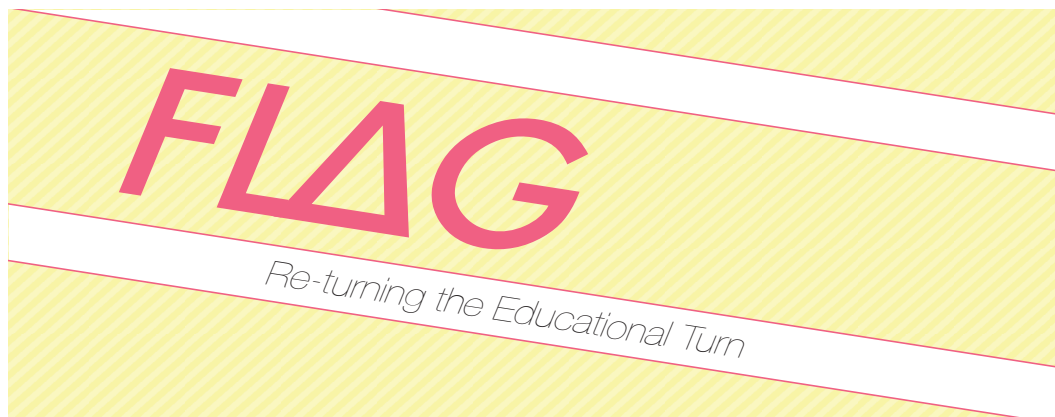
### 29th

#### 10.30 - 5.30 Final day of FLAG exhibition



Agendas /Camberwell, Chelsea, Wimbledon

Fig. 4. FLAG Programme



#### The Educational turn:

'Education' is increasingly a key concern for contemporary art practice. Documenta 12 and United Nations Plaza, the practice of artists such as Rainer Gahnal, the publication of Art School, exhibitions such as A.C.A.D.E.M.Y and conferences such as the forthcoming De-schooling Society: all have been defined under the umbrella term, 'the educational turn'. This term, coined by Irit Rogoff in 2006, covers a very wide range of concerns and events, without having a clearly defined locus.

Claiming pedagogic practices as a form of art can be seen as a way of idealising forms of art education, as an attempt to aestheticise education. Alternatively, it can be seen as a form of dematerialised, participatory art practice. Regardless of the way we choose to look at the proliferation of the 'educational turn', it demonstrates a new and widespread response to a moment of urgent self-examination both in contemporary art practice and within art education. However, it must be emphasised that so far the educational turn has mostly been a turn away from the art school and towards the art world.

#### FLAG:

Through a three-day intervention into the public gallery that is the Triangle Space, FLAG returns to, explores and plays with the 'educational turn' by re-turning the exploration of art and pedagogy to the art educational institution itself, in this case Chelsea College of Art and Design. The event is a shared venture amongst participants in dialogue with each other and the institution, the latter understood as both a physical entity and as a discursive arena. Speakers from inside and outside the art educational institution are invited to come and explore this topic within a setting of artworks that also engage with these dialogues. Key issues for pedagogic practice are methods and sites of knowledge-transfer, the artist as educator, collaboration and participation and the idealisation of art education. FLAG intends to encourage a process-based approach, stimulating dialogue rather than aiming at conclusions.

27th AM - SALTbox pt one

27th PM - Symposium (Day 1)

27th Evening - Private View

28th AM - SALTbox pt two

28th PM - Symposium (Day 2)

29th All Day - Exhibition

Please note the final programme is still to be confirmed. The full contributors list will be published shortly.

Fig. 5. FLAG Position Statement page 1.

Initially set up as a student research group under the name 'Turning Educational', **FLAG** marks an engagement with a broader public whilst still maintaining the initial research-orientated/process-based approach. The external art world and art educational institutions need to collectively build a more active, dynamic and critical relationship; it is the aim of **FLAG** to contribute to this process. What has shifted for the art school now that the educational turn has brought us 'school as art'?

**FLAG** crucially aims to explore this intersection between the 'educational turn' and art education through an event that is formed as both intervention and exhibition – where some of the issues at play are also articulated in different kinds of artwork. We see the work as a critical component of the dialogue together with the more discursive layers constituted by presentations and discussions.

#### Partners:

The Showroom Gallery is at the forefront of artist and gallery-based research into how knowledge is constructed and shared. Throughout 2010 the Gallery is running a series pilot projects under the umbrella title Communal Knowledge. By collaborating with The Showroom, we hope to build on and share expertise, comparing how different sites construct and explore knowledge, and to examine what is at stake within these various constructs.

SALT is a lo-fi magazine produced by a group of first year BA Fine Art students at Chelsea, interested in creating alternative opportunities for discussion and exchange of ideas. SALT will produce three publications in collaboration with **FLAG**: the first will be a printed issue to introduce **FLAG**, which will be distributed in the Triangle Space throughout the 27-29th April; the second will be a live issue, SALTbox, taking place on the morning of the 28th and 29th April; and the third will be another printed issue which will act as documentation of **FLAG** to be distributed at Parade: Being in Public.

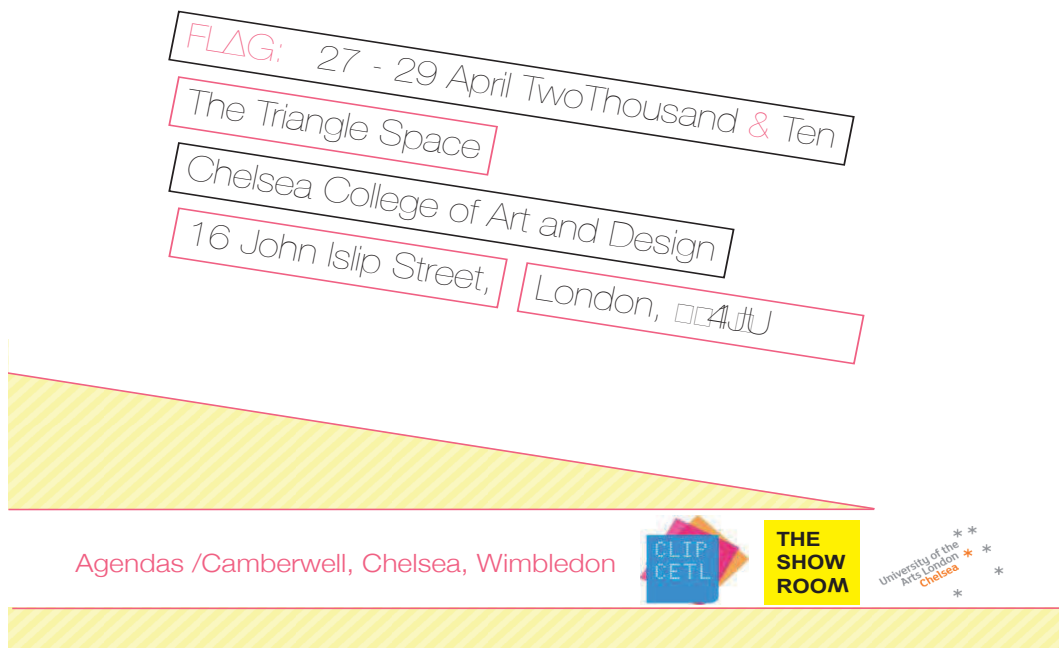


Fig. 6. FLAG Position Statement page 2.

working with the space drawing on its public potential.<sup>52</sup> We decided early on to keep the doors open as much as possible to de-emphasise the threshold between the gallery and its environs so as to really consider the location and the space's relationship within this setting.<sup>53</sup>

Understanding the Triangle as a very particular discursive and physical site was a key part of exploring the relationship between art educational practices within the academy and the educational turn outside the academy. Making site-specific art works, (responding either to the physical site of the Triangle Gallery, to the institutional site of Chelsea or to the discursive site of pedagogy as art) was a fundamental aspect of this project. This was both a way to discursively explore reflexion within art practice as well as an opportunity to explore ideas around the pedagogy of physical, material artworks, in a broader setting. The next section will both describe the exhibition but also look more closely at how some of the work can be seen to be operating reflexively.

### 3.9.2 The Exhibition

Personally I was perhaps most interested in the idea of the exhibition as a means of bringing together art works which dealt with pedagogy in a material, and not mainly a discursive manner. Some of the work going into the exhibition had typical hallmarks of discursive and immaterial practice, but other work dealt with ideas around pedagogy and spaces for learning through sculpture, video, performance and installation.

Many of the exhibited works were made for the exhibition, and thus reflexively engaged with the concept of the exhibition as well as the space itself, both in terms of its architecture but also the space as this in-between site, between the art school and the world at large. Lucy's multiple screen work was a development of a project she had undertaken as a first year student when she first exhibited in the Triangle space and wanted to create a smaller more intimate space within the space. The ambitious large scale work for FLAG, with its transparent screens, transformed the whole of the Triangle gallery (images p.140) The screens could be used to divide the space into different areas and also occupy the space with big, yet fragile transparent sculptures. The building of these screens was a large undertaking and needed everyone's participation in assembling the prefabricated elements of wood

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52 In 'An Ethics', in *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)*, Henry Madoff (ed.), London: MIT Press, 2009. Thierry de Duve, on page 18, identifies Chelsea as one of the key art schools which have a public space and he discusses the potential for this kind of public art space connected to the institution.

53 From FLAG mission statement: *'The event is a shared venture amongst participants in dialogue with each other and the institution, the latter understood as both a physical entity and as a discursive arena'*.



Image 22- 37. Setting up the exhibition, building screens and constructing the space of the Triangle Gallery for FLAG.



and metal. This activity experientially enabled us to consider ourselves and the project of FLAG in relation to the space and to gel together the core FLAG group and those who were exhibiting as part of FLAG (see images p. 149). By being big yet vulnerable the work questioned itself as being able to change the space, creating different kinds of spaces, which in turn activated participants physically as well as conceptually though using or occupying the spaces set up by the screens.

In addition to Lucy's screens, which we could configure in any way we chose during the exhibition, Jack and Janina made sculptural modules which operated as furniture: chairs and tables and plinths for projectors. Jack and Janina are not the only artists to consider furniture as key components for a physical and discursive site. For Art School UK 2010, which ran almost concurrently to FLAG, the artist Céline Condorelli made similar modular furniture structures.<sup>54</sup> Other contemporary artists, for instance Katherin Böhm (operating as part of Public Works) have also explored in different ways the possibilities of movable structures operating between function and form, to facilitate interaction.<sup>55</sup> For Jack and Janina this collaborative work related to different aspects of their individual practices. Taking part in the FLAG project and making this piece allowed them to explore aspects of their own practice in relation to the remit of the project and also enabled them to test collaborative practice. There was thus a reflexivity operating between their usual practises as individual students, the work produced for FLAG and FLAG itself.

We were interested in FLAG's 'visual identity'. Two students, Harry and Kiki (working as the Claxton Major Collective) have a practice that was closely aligned to the FLAG project, in that they had previously explored aspects of education in general, and art education in particular, in their practice. Harry and Kiki were interested in the notion of branding, and identified their own work as Claxton Major collective by incorporating their 'trademark' vertical stripes on FLAG publicity material. Thus, they were able to subtly link their practice with FLAG and, by doing so, formed FLAG's visual identity, through consultation and agreement of all core members.<sup>56</sup> The stripes and FLAG colours were playfully used on everything from the banner outside the Triangle Gallery (made by Jack and Janina) to the cake decorations.

Returning to consider the screens and the modules, it was found that these were instrumental in lending a visual identity to the exhibition. Within this framework a number of other pieces were installed. Alexander had a series of photographs and texts about Chelsea Fine Art studios; Billy made a big digital print *VERSIO*

54 See Art School UK website, ARTSCHOOL/UK', <http://www.cellprojects.org/content/revision-part-ii-céline-condorelli>, (accessed 01.10.11).

55 See public works website, <http://www.publicworksgroup.net/>, (accessed 01.10.11).

56 Playing with the visual identity of the work of Daniel Buren, whose practice helped develop institutional critique, a genre that pedagogy as art is heavily indebted to.

*EDUCATIVA*; and Joe and Oscar showed a film called *Chain of Life*, a performance where a large number of students formed a human chain down the main stair case of Chelsea and where a number of individuals (including an individual dressed in a gold lamé suit (see image p. 167), were ‘carried’ down from hand to hand. Cradeaux showed a performance filmed in Tokyo where he speaks in a constructed language known as “...”, and this is then translated by another person, (here Chris Wainwright, the head of CCW). Ricardo Basbaum’s piece, *Would you like to participate in an artistic experience?* was shown as a slide projection. Scott and Marsha, both PhD students at Chelsea, contributed with an audio piece called *Bohman Dialogue* which was only played when there was no other programmed sound (i.e. it was turned off during SALTbox and symposium presentations etc.). Rosalie set up an outpost of her *Emely* research institute where visitors were invited to submit a proposal for a research residency at the Emely. Rosalie was the only MA student and non-Chelsea based student involved in the show, and as such had a different relationship to the Triangle Gallery than the rest of us.<sup>57</sup>

### 3.9.3 SALT & SALTbox

SALT initially became involved with FLAG to create a publication based on the process of creating and preparing the event, which would be ready for the opening of FLAG. SALT would then go on to create a second publication based on the FLAG event proper, that could then be taken forward for other engagements. However, two members of SALT, Hannah and Mario, became generally involved in FLAG, from the planning stage, to speaking at the FLAG symposium, to building screens, and to running SALTbox.

The SALT publication is an A4 sheet, cut and folded to A6, which can be read as a ‘book’ or as an A4 sheet. Editorially there is a very open policy regarding contributions to facilitate collaboration and exchange between fine art students at Chelsea. As the SALT project became increasingly ambitious, it also began staging live performative events. Given the decision to concentrate the symposium into two half days, the assignment of SALTbox for the mornings meant that the form of engagements, were very different in the mornings compared to the afternoon. An unplanned but productive aspect of SALTbox was that the first SALT FLAG publication was delivered later than planned, unfolded. What might have been viewed as a failure became an occasion for collaborative effort. SALT set up an industry where the constant flow of participants were invited to pause, sitting on Jack and Janina’s furniture, to fold SALT FLAG issues. There was thus a visible and ongoing presence and a constant sense of hands-on collaborative activity within the space.

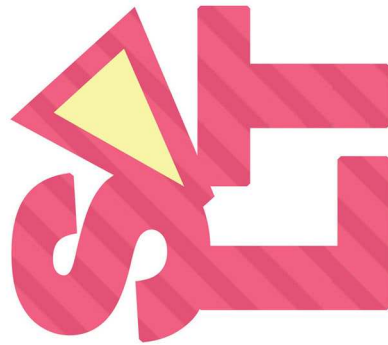
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<sup>57</sup> Although not a student, Ricardo Basbaum had his work enabled by a group of TrAIN students at CCW.





Image 38. SALT FLAG Publication I.



**M:** Perhaps this means that the educational turn has equipped students with the ability to establish their own pedagogic systems which allow them to exchange knowledge within and independent to the institutional system.

**H:** So what becomes of the institutional system? Does that mean that we should do away with it altogether?



Send your account of This Is A Free Lunch to [jimmy.ry88@googlemail.com](mailto:jimmy.ry88@googlemail.com)

Terry Atkinson, 'Phantoms of the Studio', Oxford Art Journal, Vol. 13, no. 1, 1990, pp. 49-62.

Raphael Cardoso Denis, 'The Brompton Barracks: War, Peace, and the Rise of Victorian Art and Design Education', Journal of Design History, Vol. 8, no. 1, 1995, pp. 11-25.

Art School, Steven H Madoff, (2009 Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

Why Art Cannot be Taught: A Handbook for Art Students by James Elkins (2001)

Utility and Democracy, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2006) pp. 109-36.

Philip Schofield, 'The Emergence of Similar Interests in School', The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Jacques Rancière and Kristin Ross, (1991)

Discourses in Education: A Lacanian Perspective, Peter Lang, Atkinson, D. Brown, (2006, T & England)

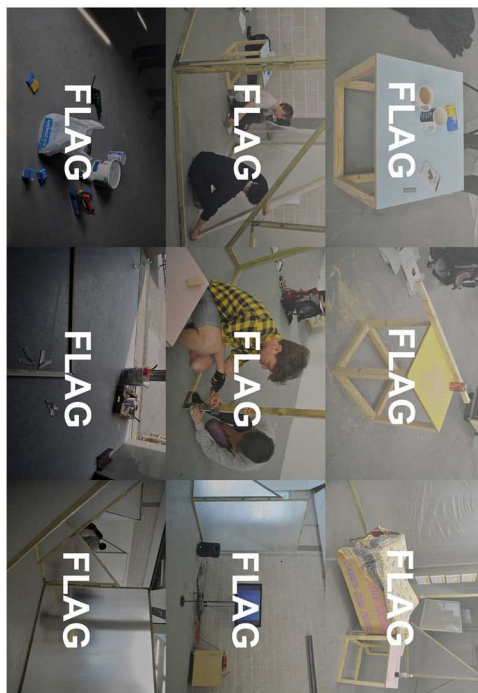
Andrew Hemingway, 'Genius Gender and Progress: Benthamism and the Arts in the 1820s', Art History, Vol. 16, no. 4, 1992, pp. 619-646

'Designing the Interface between research, learning and teaching', Design Research Quarterly 2 (3) pp. 1-11, Drew, L., 2007

Resisting Institutionalisation, by Emily Pethick, ICA

Not about institutions, but why we are so unsure of them, J.J. Charlesworth, ICA

#### Readings



SALTbox operated very interestingly in relation to the FLAG Symposium. For instance, it included more performative elements and occupied the gallery space very differently. SALT made full use of Lucy's portable screens to both create intimate spaces and also to create a more open space. They centred their activities around a zone near the entrance and thus created a clear relationship with the more public space of the parade ground. James, one of the SALT box participants, prepared and served up a free lunch right outside the door to the gallery, which he regarded as a relational, participatory art event. We can see SALTbox as a reflexive element to FLAG. In this sense SALTbox can be considered as a *mise-en-abyme*, an event within a event, a reflexive response to FLAG. SALTbox was a 'symposium within a symposium', an embedding within the work, often seen as typical for *mise-en-abyme*. Here SALTbox reflexively displayed and enacted the codes of the construction of the whole of the FLAG event.

Another interesting work relating to both SALTbox and FLAG was *Cookies educational project* where Barbara facilitated a pedagogic event in which the audience was encouraged to participate by decorating a cookie and rate their involvement (and the finished cookie) according to a set of criteria based on the Chelsea BA Fine Art learning outcomes. This took place on the first day, and on the second Barbara exhibited Excel pie-charts evidencing the outcomes of this project which she has designated as a pedagogic research project, thus a work which very explicitly and reflexively operated as an art research project *within* an art research project.

#### **3.9.4 Symposium**

The symposium was an ambitious undertaking. We had a diverse number of speakers: artists, artist-educators and pedagogues, and members of the FLAG group. We wanted all speakers to meet together before the start of the session, so we decided to offer speakers lunch. In addition, we wanted to have tea and homemade cakes, decorated in FLAG colours, available for participants and audience in the programme breaks. Presenting FLAG cakes to the public can be seen as a significant development of the FLAG cake methodology, as we began at this point to seriously appreciate the value of this way of working. Then, the cake methodology thus shifted from an emergent method of the group to a publicly visible methodology, with methods that identified the group to visitors.

We had 'curated' the presentations so that speakers of different backgrounds and with different kinds and levels of expertise were mixed together, to undermine contextual hierarchies. The extensive early curatorial discussions were frustrating on one level but ultimately provided an example of a reflexive dialogue that helped the group to understand the different concerns and agendas at play, and to articulate



the issues associated with the curation of the symposium within the group. This was facilitated by creating a 'sheet' representing each speaker, which we then put up on a wall in two formations. The formation component of each 'grouping' shifted as new possibilities were proposed. It became clear to us that each day of the symposium could be quite different to the other, depending on the line up. Through this process individuals were articulating and justifying their desires and hopes for the symposium, to the rest of the group, with acceptance being negotiated. In the end we reached a consensus and appreciated more clearly our respective agendas, which had become both visible and tangible through the discussion.

Each day the FLAG group introduced the speakers, and as part of the opening session, I gave a short talk on the 'educational turn' in the art world to provide a background to FLAG and to ask the speakers and the audience to consider the event as a re-turn of the 'educational turn' to the academy, the reapplication of pedagogy as art within the art pedagogic institution. On the last day, Michaela presented a reflection on the event as a whole.

Each day, at midday, we configured Jack and Janina's sculptural furniture modules so that they could be used to serve lunch and facilitate informal 'meets and greets'. Then we set up a larger arena for the speakers and the audience to inhabit. The modules helped to flatten a sense of hierarchy between the speakers who were all sitting together, as well as between the speakers and the audience. We also had to borrow some additional folding chairs for the symposium because it was unexpectedly oversubscribed.

In the programme for the first day Hannah and Mario represented FLAG and gave a well-received presentation in the form of a scripted dialogue. They were followed by two pedagogues: Dennis Atkinson, Professor of Art in Education and Head of the Research Centre for the Arts and Learning in the Department of Educational

Studies at Goldsmiths College, and Professor Linda Drew, the Director of the CCW Graduate School. We then had two artists. The first Ana Laura López de la Torre, is an artist and writer based in London with a collaborative practice. She is also a PhD candidate at Chelsea. The second, Rebecca Fortnum is a CCW Reader and MA Visual Arts (Fine Art) Pathway Leader at Camberwell. She is a painter and a researcher whose interests include documenting fine artists' processes, visual intelligence and fine art pedagogic research. Finally we had Emily Pethick, the Director of The Showroom, previously the Director of Casco, who has significantly contributed to the development of modes of engagement in the art-world, labelled as the educational turn.

The second day provided a different 'temperature' in terms of the speakers,



institutions and even genders. The speakers included Chloe Briggs, an artist and Head of Foundation at Parsons Paris School of Design, Professor Neil Cummings an artist and professor at Chelsea College of Art and Design, and a key member of Critical Practice Research Group. FLAG was represented by Harry, half of Major



Image 40. Curating the speakers. Photo: Katrine Hjelde

Claxton collective, who talked about the work of their collective and spoke of the students' perspective, on the question of what the student wants to know and how he or she wants to learn it? Later we heard from Dr Malcolm Quinn, a Reader in Critical Practice at Wimbledon and Course Director of the MRes in Art Practice, who has undertaken research on the publicly funded art school in the UK. Terry Smith is an artist working across a range of mediums and has been instrumental in setting up the Experimental Art School: "The school is simply a way of focusing ideas and projects whose main intention is to look at the making and breaking of art".<sup>58</sup> Rehana Zaman, an artist who worked as a project coordinator for the Communal Knowledge project at the Showroom Gallery, was the last speaker of the day.

One group decision that FLAG made was not to produce sound recordings or in particular not to video the Symposium. I wanted to record the event, as I was thinking about its value for the thesis and also as I thought it would be a rich source of data for us all after the event. However, the majority did not support this idea. They felt it was too problematic, in that it raised questions as to the location of the *work* of FLAG. They wanted the event to be the work and that this work should involve participation within the site of the Triangle Gallery. There was also a concern that video and sound recording would appear as capturing the totality of the event and not be transparent about itself as being a selective representation, skewered by the subjectivity of the those undertaking it.

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.experimentalartschool.com> (accessed 11.05.10).



Image 41-43. FLAG Symposium speakers and listeners.  
Photo: Billy Tang.

FLAG was however extensively documented photographically. This was undertaken by two students, as an extension of their own practice. Billy and Alex made the images available on flickr for us all to use (under a copy left agreement).<sup>59</sup> As a set of data, we saw it as operating very differently than a sound or video recording since it, arguably, makes less claims of objectivity and as a material it lends itself also to more clearly art-based forms of interpretation. The documentation could thus also potentially operate as art in a different context. The artist Rainer Ganahl has made a series of works called *Seminars/Lectures*, since 1995 (ongoing) which the FLAG photo documentation could be seen to echo.<sup>60</sup>

At the end of FLAG week, some of the exhibiting artists agreed to invigilate while the rest of us attended the Deschooling conference. The speakers here included Carmen Moerch, Mick Wilson, Sally Tallant, Irit Rogoff, and Martha Rossler, all of whom have been instrumental towards forming and interpreting the work that is seen as constitutive of the educational turn. The conference took place in a large auditorium in the South Bank centre. Speakers were located on a stage, with the audience seated in the dark, tiered in the auditorium: a distinctly hierarchical, one-way set up. There were plenaries between clusters of individual presenters, but little time for audience Q and A, and no time for dialogue across the room. It was, in many ways, a highly conventional conference. This was in marked contrast to the FLAG symposium where we tried to *apply* the principles of the educational turn, as far as possible, by emphasising the social, process, and avoiding hierarchical structures. This made for a very different experience. Comparing FLAG to 'Deschooling' society is on some levels futile as they relate to different kinds of events within different institutions, with different remits. However, when as a group we reflected on FLAG after the event, the 'Deschooling' symposium became an important point of comparison.

### 3.9.5 FLAG — a reflexive reflection

Before, during and after the actual event of FLAG, ongoing reflective and reflexive work was involved. The reflection(s) were undertaken by a series of what I would

59 Richard Stallman coined the idea of 'copyleft' in 1984. 'Copyleft attempts to create a commons based on reciprocal rights and responsibilities — those who want to share the common resources have certain ethical obligations to respect the rights of other users. Everyone can add to the commons, but no one may subtract from it'.

Anna Nimbus, *Copyright, Copyleft and the Creative Anti-Commons — A Genealogy of Authors' Property Rights*, 2006, [http://multitudes.samizdat.net/spip.php?page=imprimer&id\\_article=2737](http://multitudes.samizdat.net/spip.php?page=imprimer&id_article=2737), (accessed 20.11.11).

60 'Seminar/Lecture (S/L) photographs are taken in class rooms and lectures since 1995. It is an ongoing series letting me stay in touch with professors, lecturers knowledge and information that interest me. For each event several pictures are selected including the audience.' See Ganahl's website, [http://www.ganahl.info/s\\_sl\\_index.html](http://www.ganahl.info/s_sl_index.html), (accessed 10.02.12).

characterise as reflexive undertakings. The description of the build-up to FLAG and the event itself has tried to give a sense of these. This next part could perhaps be seen as reflexion on action on a reflection-in-action, to hybridise Schön's notion.

Reflection-on-action was continually important and in a sense interconnected and made visible aspects of the ongoing reflexive praxis. Below I will discuss an explicit example of a reflective undertaking, *Cream Tea at the Emely*, because it was the first gathering after FLAG where we met purposefully to reflect on the event. Here we began to articulate the role and form of reflection operating in FLAG and articulate its potential for future events.

Funny enough, most of us went directly from FLAG to the Hayward Conference about "De-schooling society". I took this picture of one of the talks, and for me it sums up the failure of most discussions about 'the educational turn' or the challenging of social hierarchies. I mean a set-up like this, with selected speakers sitting on a stage and the audience being banned to the dark, is completely the opposite of a de-schooled society. There is just such a discrepancy between the content/ aims of the conference and what it actually does.

I guess the questions are: How can you really have an impact, instead of just imitating the current system or providing a new terminology for old institutions? How can you do your own thing, without unconsciously striving for the approval of the establishment? And why does this whole discussion remain strictly within the artworld/artschool?<sup>61</sup>

A few weeks after we had dismantled FLAG, Rosalie invited the FLAG group for a cream tea at her Emely research studio. It was here that we begun to tease out some of the things that we had achieved with FLAG. What worked well, what had worked less well, what could have been different and what would we like to do next. Also present at this event were some students and artists associated with the Emely. This meant that we had to explain to these participants in the cream tea what we did and why, and to qualify statements in order for them to make sense to all present. Rosalie served tea and scones and Mario from FLAG had baked biscotti. Rosalie started the session by showing images from the event (see images previous page). The do-it-yourself aesthetic of her presentation was in line with the use of 'improvised forms' identified by Andrea Philips in her assessment of the educational turn.<sup>62</sup> However, for Rosalie and for her project, the Emely, this kind of aesthetic is entirely linked to content, in as much as the form and content are codependent, and the form is 'knowing', operating reflexively as a reflection on the context and content of the work. The Emely is the embodiment of Rosalie's practice as an artist which happens to share many of the concerns of FLAG.

61 Quote from Rosalie's introduction at the Cream Tea. See the The Emely website. <http://emely.wikispaces.com/About+FLAG>, (accessed 11.10.11).

62 Andrea Phillips in 'You Talkin' to Me? Why is art turning to education', *Salon Discussions*, Institute of Contemporary art, 14 July, 2008.



Image 44-49. Rosalie Sweiker's introduction of cream tea at the Emely. Photocopies and photos: Rosalie Schweiker



A key difference between FLΔG and the Emely, however, is that the Emely is 'owned' by Rosalie. The Emely is sometimes a facilitator for other projects as it was to FLΔG by arranging the cream tea, the Emely as a project belongs to Rosalie.<sup>63</sup>

After Rosalie's presentation, we all discussed FLΔG, as an event we could all 'own', in different ways, which made for a very different experience to the crit-like structure of the tutor group, or other seminars — which involves discussing individual students work, sequentially. Here any critique implicates the speaker him/herself and interestingly criticality often stops short of fully expressing real concerns. By contrast, the kind of praxis evident in an art/education project such as FLΔG (with its incumbent sense of common ownership) enables reflexion in Alvesson and Sköldberg's sense. It is something that constantly refers back to



Image 50-51 The Emely Residency application station.

itself and its methods, but can also operate through non-word based forms such as we see in Rosalie's images on p. 160, where she had connected together a display of images on a home-made 'clipboard' to narrate the event.<sup>64</sup> This board which operated somewhere between a clip-board and a frame, thus referencing forms of art display as well as a generic presentation style. From this Cream Tea at the Emely we developed a sense that the discussions were in some way an extension of FLΔG itself and as such we started to see a possibility for us to continue to work together, to form as a group, taking our name from FLΔG.

63 The Emely is a name for the need to set up your own thing. The Emely facilitates activities commonly classified as hobby, play or art. The Emely functions on a small scale, under adverse conditions and despite better knowledge. The Emely will be in a permanent space by 2019, preferably in a semi-detached house in rural South Germany. Until then, different versions of the Emely are tried out in various locations. The Emely is another name for Rosalie Schweiker's studio space. The Emely involves a great number of other people and institutions who are listed. See Emely website, <http://emely.wikispaces.com/what+is+the+Emely>, (accessed 12.02.12).

64 Alvesson and Sköldberg, *Reflexive methodology*.

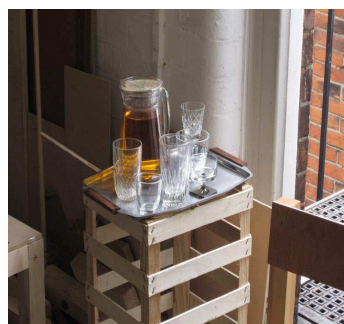
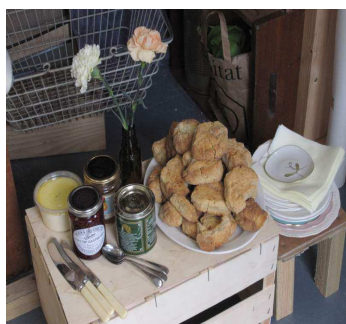


Image 52-55. Cream tea at the Emely. Photo: Rosalie Schweiker.



Thus by discussing the Emely and its presence at FLΔG, we can make some sense of some of the different ways reflexion operated within the project as a whole as well as within individuals practice. To recap: FLΔG grew out of ‘turning educational’, a project I initiated in order to see how reflection in teaching and learning terms and in artistic practices could reflexively relate to each other. I was particularly interested in how this would work in relation to students’ individual practice, how an intersection between FLΔG and their work could facilitate forms of reflection for them, be it discursively through the symposium and SALT box or through making, for instance, in the case of the screens and the furniture. My aim was to move reflection in learning and practice, from being a private undertaking into a public sphere. I wanted to see what alternatives there could be to the written forms of reflection, that are often instrumentalised by the institution and which often involve a sense of there being a ‘right way to reflect’ as described in Site 2. I had hoped to set in motion a process of reflexive praxis, a shared practice that would be useful and productive for any student involved, and generative towards this research. I hoped it could also shine a new light on my own understanding of my own practice as an artist.<sup>65</sup> For this project I would not have a clear sense of competency to be shared with the students, but rather I was finding my way, learning and developing through this process of reflexive praxis.

Rosalie’s work in FLΔG, the ‘residency application station’ can be employed to unpack some of these mechanisms. The miniature furniture, purpose built to contain application forms and writing material, as well as a ‘chair’ to sit on was very effective as a piece that spoke about the role of residencies for emerging and established artists and the anxieties that writing these kind of applications can involve. It had particular aesthetic qualities, a DIY recycled look as described above. It could also be seen as a form of institutional critique since the residency applied for was in the Emely, which was currently located within the MA studios in Camberwell College of Arts. In other words, someone could be ‘awarded’ a residency in the Emely without being an MA student, and could therefore ‘illicitly’ (from the institutions point of view), partake in an otherwise exclusive and select activity.

### 3.10 Conclusion

FLΔG was an event designed to explore practice as praxis. It sought to consider praxis by exploring those forms of reflexion found in emerging art practices, but also by relating these reflexive forms to more commonly understood research based methods, in for instance social science. FLΔG was also an art research

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65 Aslaug Nyrnes, ‘Lighting from the Side: Rhetoric and Artistic Research’, *Focus on Artistic Research and Development*, no. 03, Bergen: Bergen National Academy of the Arts, 2006.

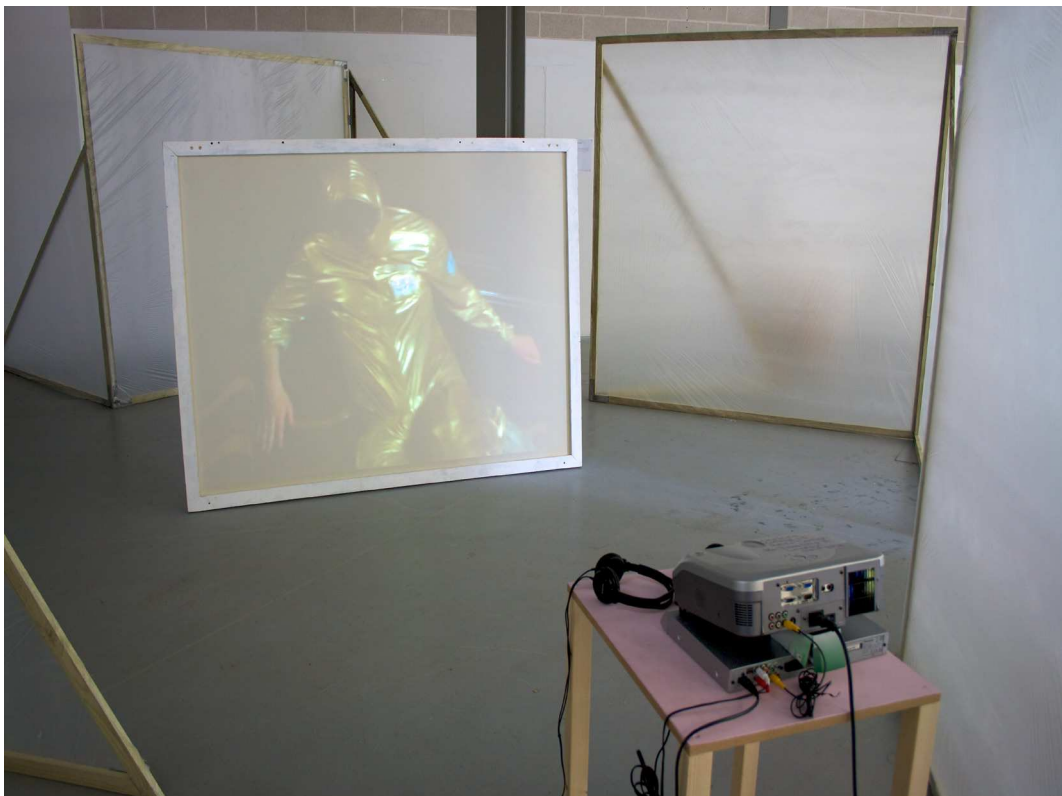
project which explored notions of pedagogy as art, appropriating the 'educational turn' in the art world as a method for working together with a group of students (and staff) instead of simply doing research on them.

This undertaking does not herald a new model for HE art educational research since it was specific to a very particular time and place and entirely dependant on a set of cultural and social determinants including the education turn in the art world. This fact, however, is not a weakness of the project. On the contrary, the value of FLAG lies in demonstrating the possibilities and potential for future projects to operate in a similar fashion, group projects that could link with a specific concern, issue or aspect of the art world to enable a sustained period of reflexive praxis in the art school. FLAG underlines the value of joint endeavours, a fact which goes against the idea that students individual practices are always best developed by working on individual projects. Whilst Schön's reflective practicum is not an operational model in an art school like Chelsea, this kind of project in one sense sets up a reflective practicum, but one which I would prefer to call a *reflective site*, since as the tutors practice comes into the work less as a transmission model and more as an acted, enacted model. Which opens up a space for all involved to be mindful of how they 'perform' their practice. A project like this can be a way to create a site for praxis in the art school, where public shared practice moves from a more discursive plane to a performed situation.



Image 56. Video piece in FLAG exhibition, *Chain of Life*, by Oscar Oldershaw and Joe Campbell. Photo: Alexander Blackman.

# Conclusions: Reflection, Relevance and Responsibility







How do we as artistic researchers, through critical reflection, address and engage with what we see around us? How can artistic research make a meaningful and relevant contribution outside of itself? And how can it acknowledge the responsibility of art and research towards the world outside the academy?<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.0 Introduction

The Sensuous Knowledge Conference in Bergen organised by Bergen National Academy of the Arts (KhiB) in 2009, was entitled *Reflection, Relevance and Responsibility*. It was aimed at the emerging art research community and the principle questions were posed in relation to the role and potential of artistic research in the broader cultural context.<sup>2</sup> By participating and contributing to the conference, I became increasingly aware that the notions of relevance and responsibility were central to my own research interests in reflection and reflexion.<sup>3</sup> I am very grateful to the conference organisers for thus presenting me with a very useful coupling — relevance and responsibility — which I will consider towards the conclusions to this thesis.

I will first revisit the research described within the three main sections of this thesis: Site 1: Practice Site, Site 2: Teaching Site and Site 3: Praxis Site, and assess the outcomes in relation to the relevance and responsibility of reflection. Within this final visit to these sites, I will outline the contributions that I claim my research makes in the fields of art pedagogy and practice-based art research. Knowledge is, as this thesis shows, a highly disputed concept and therefore the research described did not search for a definitive answer to the question of what knowledge is or how it is constituted. Rather, this thesis can be understood as a mapping of forms of learning operating within the art and teaching practice interrelationship. By revisiting the sites, my aim is to delineate the contribution to academic knowledge that has emerged from this structure and from the research within these discursive sites.

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1 See website <http://sensuousknowledge.org/2009/03/reflection-relevance-responsibility/> (accessed 12.11.11)

2 The Sensuous Knowledge Conferences took place between 2004- 2009, the remit of which can be seen in the following quote, 'In this way the conference will take a first step towards developing a language in which we can discuss such [art research] projects in a meaningful way, and help us to distinguish between what is essential or of minor importance, forceful or bland, good or less good in this field. It is to be expected that the presentation of examples will show how varied the field is, and give rise to the question whether it is at all possible to develop just one common language for this multifariousness'. See Sensuous Knowledge website, <http://sensuousknowledge.org/2004/05/sensuous-knowledge-12004-creating-a-tradition/> (accessed 12.11.11)

3 My presentation was called: *How do artist reflect? Relevance and responsibility for art research and education within the academy*, see Sensuous Knowledge website, <http://sensuousknowledge.org/category/sk6/sk6-presentations/> (accessed 12.11.11)

Furthermore, I will propose that the methodology itself, of applying site-specificity as a device for embracing the fields of knowledge or disciplinary discourses, is relevant to research operating *between* art and pedagogy. I will then end the thesis with a critique of this research project together with indications of further work or, to paraphrase Marshall McLuhan, how we might go forward through the rearview mirror.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.1 Practice site

Site 1: The Practice Site demonstrated that knowledge is an almost impossible concept to define in relation to art practice, but an important concept nevertheless because it determines many curricular aspects of higher level art education and how art and research are situated within the University system, post the Bologna Accord. I found that in terms of my own practice, knowledge is dispersed between processes, which includes skills, making, research, the materiality of the work itself, as well as the work as a relational entity. The term 'relational' can be understood here both in the sense of deliberate relational art practice (in Bourriaud's terminology) but also in the sense that any art can be seen to form relations and connections between people, institutions, and art objects.

The kinds of reflective practices undertaken by artists do not seem to be directly interchangeable with the more generic models found in teaching and learning theory or self-development literature. In addition, the reflective models found in these 'generic' teaching and learning models are informed by different philosophical provenance that frames the role and outcome of reflective practice. For Dewey, reflection is the key to learning; for Habermas it is key towards emancipatory forms of knowledge (i.e., those that reveal oppression and constraint and encourage collective emancipatory endeavour, and which are thus political in character). Whereas for Schön reflection is at the heart of an epistemology of professional practice. We saw how it is his project that underlies both the most current teaching and learning-related theory on reflection and reflective practice in art research in the art school, as Schön seems to offer a rationale for art practice as knowledge producing.

The research for Site 1: The Practice Site found that an artist's reflection may well not be word-based and often takes place through making. In this respect reflection can be seen to become embedded into the practice itself rather than exist as a parallel activity. In addition, elements of play, chance, ignorance, 'not knowing' and other forms of tacit knowledge, also have an important place within an artist's

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4 Using this book title as inspiration for this phrase: Marshall McLuhan and Paul Benedetti *Forward Through the Rearview Mirror*, MIT Press, 1996.

reflective activity.<sup>5</sup> Here I also found that artist reflection can be seen as reflexive, that the reflexive concept of *mise-en-abyme* could be seen as an example of a particular reflexive form. Thus we see that reflection and reflexivity are operating as established strategies in art, and even as aesthetic strategies.

This reflexivity is something we can recognise and which could be encouraged as a potential method for research, as a reflection that explores its own form, its own coherence and content in a dialogical relationship with an audience. There is no claim for privileging art-based reflexion, but a suggestion that this form of reflection can have potential, even as it at times results in narcissism.

However, reflexivity sometimes creates complex and sometimes even bewildering relationships between processes that feed back on themselves in critical reflection but which employ discourses substantiated by familiar codes and conventions. Active interpretation is key to engaging with this kind of work, and thus rigour has to be applied by the viewer/reader as much as by the artist/researcher.<sup>6</sup> The notion of rigour ties in with relevance and responsibility of reflection for artists and particularly artist researchers, as developing reflexive strategies *from* a practice rather than imposed on a practice involves taking full responsibility for that practice including an articulation of its relevance.

#### 4.2 Teaching site

Within the HE art institution, reflection has become a key subject in discussions around student-centred teaching encounters and it is often seen as the critical process by which fine art students progress and articulate their development.

Site 2: Teaching Site in this thesis describes a framework in which teaching and research about teaching was structured and conducted. This site enabled me to undertake research through the practice of teaching, to analyse how my practice comes into teaching, and to explore how teaching can draw explicitly on practice yet still operate critically and not result in a return to Haughton's Academy model whereby the tutor sets up his/her practice as a model to be emulated. Through forms of participatory action research I found ways to undertake research which involved working more closely with the students and to begin to break down aspects of the subject object research hierarchy which was problematic for this form of 'insider' research due to my role as a teacher.

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5 Rebecca Fortnum and Katrine Hjelde, 'Fine Art's educational turn', in David Clews (ed.), *Dialogues in Art And Design: Promoting and Sharing Excellence*, ADM-HEA/GLAD, 2009.

6 Marsha Bradfield, Katrine Hjelde, 'Future Reflections future (re) composition', *Art Monitor* 8, 2010.

The setting up of a teaching site provided an alternative structure for exploring the relationship between practice and teaching, one potentially enabling more criticality than other research models. Shreeve's model, for instance, very usefully describes the different ways that tutors conceptualise the interrelationship between their practice and their teaching. However, the idea of considering teaching practice as a site enables the practitioner/researcher to consider a plurality of critical positions while also considering the physical dimension and specificity of the institution. Furthermore, the concept of site could provide an environment in which the researcher can be productively critical of their own role within the institution and of their various related practices.

Whilst developing a teaching site through my research it quickly became clear that there cannot be a 'right' way to reflect. Discomfort and problems with 'reflecting' were most strongly experienced in this research when operating an institutionalised pedagogic method (related to reflection-on-action in Schön's terms). As Angela Devas points out, reflective practice can end up appearing confessional, with the power of judgement and approval then residing with the 'listening' institution, rather than with the reflective student or practitioner.<sup>7</sup> This danger can become most acute when reflection is linked to assessment. Educational institutions need to foster *responsible* student-owned reflection, particularly in relation to those forms moulded on Dewey's philosophy (where reflection on practice is a private activity for the individual student). However, HE teaching institutions could certainly benefit from sustained discussions around reflection, and perhaps even from staff operating as 'reflective practitioners' as outlined by pedagogues like Brookbank and McGill and Cowan.<sup>8</sup> Making space for the rich potential of reflexive art practice is key. Seen in this way art practice has further relevance to other forms of educational research.

It is also crucial that we continually question and explore the models of reflection already in operation within educational institutions. The way we choose to reflect has many implications both for art education and for art research, some of which may not be in the best interest of the art researcher, the student or for the expanded arena of knowledge production that art research and art pedagogy can contribute to.

### 4.3 Praxis site

The final section of this thesis, the Praxis Site, was developed to accommodate a student research project, which became known as FLAG, and took place at Chelsea

7 Angela Devas, 'Reflection as confession: discipline and docility in/on the student body', *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education*, 3 (1) 2004, pp. 33-46.

8 Brookbank and McGill, *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*. Cowan, *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher*.

College of Art, April 2010. With FLΔG we attempted to return the 'educational turn' in the art world 'back' to the art school. Whilst I initiated the project as a component of this doctoral research, the models of engagement found within pedagogy-as-art enabled a group of students to co-own the process and the outcomes of FLΔG. It was considered by all involved to be relevant both to art, art pedagogy and art research, using the educational turn as a point of departure for a series of discussions, performances, artworks and presentation, which went beyond the original remit of the project. Whilst I believed this could become a successful project, I was delighted at the way FLΔG took on a life of its own and the way all involved engaged with the undertaking.

My initial intention was to construct a site of praxis, where multiple forms of action and reflection could in some way reflexively operate in relation to each other. However, ultimately this site also fostered a very useful exploration of the relevance and responsibility of reflection within the art school. The development of the Praxis Site and FLΔG actively qualified the relevance of reflection in art education, by demonstrating the need for alternative forms of student-led reflection which are open, involves shared practice, and whose outcomes are not overly predetermined by curricula learning outcomes. Ownership, in this sense, actively encourages group responsibility and even highlights how responsibility can be actively linked to reflection.

Group reflective practices such as FLΔG also reveal how artistic knowledge can, in fact, become a web of interconnected knowledges which have more dynamism and critical potential when not subsumed into ready-made classifications and institutional systems. All this is, of course, determined by the 'right' set of educational circumstances and an interested motivated student body. Nevertheless, this form of praxis could be significant for other pedagogic sites, institutions and disciplines.

The idea of 'reflexive praxis' could be relevant and significant for other pedagogic sites, art practices (including relational practices, socially engaged practices and including works made under the umbrella of the educational turn), but also for developing individually owned material art practices, and for understanding art practice as something expanded to include different activities at different times where their interrelationships provides fertile ground for reflexivity. Understanding artistic knowledge as a web of interconnected knowledges, enables greater critical potential when not subsumed into ready-made classifications and systems.

Andrea Phillips has pointed out that the serviceability and thus 'assessability' of the (reflective) practitioner within the institution is in contrast to what has become known as the 'educational turn' in the art world, where modes of pedagogy, including

reflective practice, are adopted as art practice away from the art educational site.<sup>9</sup> Undertaking educational research through an art project like FLAG aligned the research more closely with aspects of the art world, and circumvented aspects of assessability, although this circumvention was perhaps more of a suspension as this thesis will indeed be assessed, and the students involved will have had their learning assessed as part of the course, even when their work on a project like FLAG is itself not assessed. Reflective practices within an institution will perhaps always be, in some sense, 'owned' or co-opted by the institution.

#### 4.4 Constructing a reflective site?

I set out by defining the entire research project as a 'reflective site', (by framing and using Miwon Kwon's genealogy of site-specificity) and in turn set up a construction of three very particular discursive sites: a Practice Site, a Teaching Site and a Praxis Site, which together form a totality, the reflective site of the entire research. Together these drew on a number of disciplines, but were not restricted to traditional disciplinary demarcations. The concept of indisciplinarity (as defined by Ranciere) was used to frame this unorthodox approach since the research did not seamlessly fit within an *inter*, *multi* or *trans* disciplinary research model.

In art practice-based research terms, the three sites allowed me to explore and construct a theoretical and practical framework for action, one that had experiential foundations in my own art practice. While being informed by my own arts practice, the research framework has, in turn, been subtly transformed by it to the extent where for me the two are sometimes indivisible. I would contrast this with the work of art researchers who employ methods derived from social sciences or humanities, which appear in some instances to be incommensurable with their artistic practice. Recognising this tension I would suggest that the research approach taken here allows the physical, conceptual and practical aspect of artistic research to cohere in a productive exchange in which each is agitated by the other.

While the use of sites was determined by emergent strains of art theory as well as emergent forms of pedagogic art practice, in the form of the educational turn, within and without the institution they can also be seen as purely an experiential, subjective construct, something that comes into being by the collision of speech, performance, and the fabrication of physical objects. By considering the project as a site-specific undertaking it was possible to reflexively work outside of disciplinary boundaries and to productively challenge them rather than simply rejecting or breaking them down. As Borgdorff has pointed out, art research takes place in the hinterland between the art world and the academic institution, which for me is

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9 Andrea Phillips, 'Education Aesthetics' in *Curating and the Educational Turn*, O'Neill and Wilson (eds.), Amsterdam: De Appel/Open Editions, 2010.



crucial because it is precisely this place that the artist-teacher and the art student both find themselves operating.<sup>10</sup>

The site-specific approach does not, however, resolve problems for the broader context of research in art education. For instance the requirement for artists to, in a sense, 'intervene' in a site, which (as Kwon has pointed out) is a problematical aspect of site-specific art practice and equally so in this or a different pedagogical or institutional context.<sup>11</sup> Whether the setting up of such sites will prove productive or useful for any others undertaking art/pedagogy practice-based research remains to be seen. While we cannot know at this point whether the approach taken here will prove a directly transferable model to other situations, it does indicate that research methods can be expanded by drawing on art concepts and practices. As a structure for the exploration of reflection between art and pedagogy it proved productive because it allowed for the identification and exploration of different actual and possible kinds of reflection afforded by the different contexts.

#### 4.5 Rear-view reflection

As I come to the end of this particular research journey I have some sense of the terrain traversed and the ground gained. I can see that other routes may have been equally suitable and may have provided perhaps different insights and findings.

It is a concern that this research may contribute to the proliferation of material on reflection since it is becoming increasingly clear to me that the concept should be approached with caution. It needs to be treated according to the multifarious and complex terrain(s) in which a number of different and at times even conflicting notions of reflection and reflexion have been cultivated. Given the research described above I see a need for a more critical exploration of the coupling of reflection and knowledge and the way that reflective knowledge or reflected knowledge deals with issues of power.

As Foucault has taught us, power is always present and forms of communication always risks being distorted by power relations. Both Schön's reflection-on-action and Habermas's 'communicative rationality' can be set out as a norm, a technique or even as a method to be enforced. For instance within the educational institution, Michaela Ross and I found that 'Foucault shows us that we can challenge statements of universality, focusing instead on the particularities of context and on key questions concerning these power relations: who stands to benefit from a

10 Henk Borgdorff, 'Artistic Research as Boundary Work', in *How does Artistic Research Change us?* Proceedings of CARPA 1 - 1st Colloquium on Artistic Research in Performing Arts Theatre Academy, Helsinki November 19-21, 2009, [http://files.teatterikorkeakoulu.fi/carpa/CARPA\\_1\\_proceedings.pdf](http://files.teatterikorkeakoulu.fi/carpa/CARPA_1_proceedings.pdf), (accessed 02 December 2011).

11 Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 2004.

discourse of reflection?’<sup>12</sup> We have to question whether the position of the reflective artist, teacher or student can ever be neutral and to ‘reflect’ on the reflective sites, as found or constructed, particularly with regards to which discourse, (word-based or indeed material), dominates at any particular time.

We can also ask if reflection is something we want to develop as a form of subject-specificity in artistic research or if reflection should be a way to align it and its claims to knowledge production with other forms of academic research.

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<sup>12</sup> Katrine Hjelde and Michaela Ross, ‘Constructing a Reflective Site within Art Education’, in *Enhancing Curricula: using research and enquiry to inform student learning in the disciplines*, Ed. Nicholas Houghton, CLTAD, 2008.





## **Glossary**

AL	Associate Lecturer at UAL
AR	Action Research
BA FA	Bachelor of Arts, Fine Art
CCW	Camberwell, Chelsea, Wimbledon
CETLs	Centre for Excellency in Teaching and Learning
CLIP CETL	Creative Learning in Practice Centre for Excellency in Teaching and Learning
CLTAD	Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design
Critical Practice	Research Group connected to Chelsea College of Art and Design
Claxton Major Collective	Collaboration between two third year BA FA students
FLΔG	An event organised as part of this Doctoral Research which formed as a group after the event
FRRG	Future Reflections Research Group
GLAD	Group for Learning in Art and Design
HE	Higher Education
PG Cert	Post Graduate Certificate (in Teaching and Learning)
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PARADE	Public modes of assembly and forms of address event organised by Critical Practice Research group at Chelsea.
POSTBOX	FLΔG/SALT event for PARADE
SALT	An independent; not-for-profit; lo-fi publication and collaborative student group based at Chelsea.
SALTbox	Live version of SALT magazine for FLΔG event
TrAIN	The University of the Arts Research Centre for Transnational Art, Identity and Nation
UAL	University of the Arts, London





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## Appendices

- A) Marsha Bradfield, Katrine Hjelde and Catherine Maffioletti, 'Future Reflections: Future Rhetoric', in Nimkulrat, Nithikul, and O'Riley, Tim (eds.), *Reflections and Connections: On the relationship between creative production and academic research*, Helsinki: University of Art and Design, 2009, pp. 195-206.
  
- B) Bradfield, Marsha and Hjelde, Katrine, 'Future Reflections future (re) composition', *Art Monitor* 8, 2010, pp. 209-220.
  
- C) Katrine Hjelde 'Between Fine Art and Teaching: Reflecting Creative Passion', in Noam Austerlitz (ed.) *Unspoken Interaction: Exploring the Role of Emotions and Social Interactions in Art and Design Education*, CLTAD, 2008. 223-233.
  
- D) Katrine Hjelde and Michaela Ross, 'Constructing a Reflective Site within Art Education', in *Enhancing Curricula: using research and enquiry to inform student learning in the disciplines*, Houghton, Nicholas, (ed.), CLTAD, 2008, pp. 235-245.
  
- E) Rebecca Fortnum and Katrine Hjelde, 'FineArt's educational turn', in Clews, David, (ed.), *Dialogues in Art And Design: Promoting and Sharing Excellence*, ADM-HEA/GLAD, 2009, 247-254.

**Appendix A:** Marsha Bradfield, Katrine Hjelde and Catherine Maffioletti, 'Future Reflections: Future Rhetoric', in Nimkulrat, Nithikul, and O'Riley, Tim (eds.), *Reflections and Connections: On the relationship between creative production and academic research*, Helsinki: University of Art and Design, 2009, pp. 194-205.



# Reflections and Connections

On the relationship between creative production  
and academic research

EDITED BY  
NITHIKUL NIMKULRAT  
AND TIM O'RILEY



# Future Reflections: Rhetorical Response

FUTURE REFLECTIONS RESEARCH GROUP

(Catherine Maffioletti, Katrine Hjelde and Marsha Bradfield)

## ITINERARY: DEPARTURE

Rigour, benefit, context, originality, dissemination and legibility are seen as primary conditions<sup>1</sup> that art must address to qualify as Research<sup>2</sup>. To explore these conditions, Future Reflections Research Group considers practice-based art R/research as an object, entity and purpose of study. Through performative presentations, critical and creative writing<sup>3</sup> and relational artworks, we investigate the potential of art and/as Research to promote new and/or multivalent understanding(s) – some of which interrogate the emergent institution(s) of art Research.

The coupling of art and Research as distinct modes of inquiry in the theory and practice of art

Research complicates the widespread assumption that Research outcomes should be unequivocal. If, following Stephen Scrivener's sense that art is marked by hypotheses and possible interpretations (2002) while Research is characterized by conclusions and certainties, art Research emerges as a contradiction in terms. Embracing this incongruity, our R/research methods explore ambiguous and heterogeneous significance (Law 2007). One of these methods includes occupying what we term the third space, a kind of socio-psychic-poetic realm that, despite resisting easy explanation, may be described as a container for the group's activity. Concomitantly, the third space provides a metaphor for art R/research where distinctions between theory and practice, process and product, content and form, and artist and audience are blurred in an attempt to challenge some of the institutional assumptions (Biggs 2006a) about art and/as Research.

This self-reflective/reflexive paper maps our emergent sense of the third space in relation to, Future Response: Is the Question the Answer?, our contribution to *The Art of Research* seminar, Helsinki – October 2007. At stake in this discussion is an understanding of Future Response<sup>4</sup> as both a

1 Dissemination, originality and community, as discussed by Biggs (2006), are the three core criteria of art research.

2 As described later in this paper, we delineate between research with a capital "R" e.g. institutionalized research and research with a small "r" as "finding things out," to use Tim O'Riley's turn of phrase (2007); or "searching" to use Christopher Frayling's diction (1993).

3 In keeping with Future Reflections' critical and creative practice, the key voices in this paper are presented in different fonts to accent the distinct sensibilities at play in the process of collaborative writing. See Legends below for further exploration/explanation of the issues at stake in articulating a polyphonic reflexive dialogue.

4 From this point forward, Future Response: Is the question the answer will be referred to as Future Response.



site-specific event and a process of generative R/research. Similarly, reading between, around and through the text below involves listening to a chorus of voices that echo and/or interrupt one another in a cacophony of utterances. These voices sound through our practice-based R/research, expressing different sensibilities borne of the group members' respective epistemic cultures, including art theory, practice, and history alongside pedagogy, sociolinguistics and performance studies. To this end, this text enacts our thematic interests in interdisciplinary R/research practices and experimental R/research processes.

#### LEGEND<sup>5</sup>: APPROACH

Here we consider the third space as a site for generating the practice-based art Research Thesis. The composition of this text comprises of a mapping through different temporally dispersed voices as a reflexive dialogue. There are three main voices that discourse in this paper – each situated as either representing the character of Future Reflections Research Group (the R/research student collaboration), the institution (the certifier of Research) and the academic (the certified researcher). These different voices embody some of the diverse positions that regulate practice-based Research's Knowledge production. Hence, the form and content of this paper performatively questions approaches to K/knowledge productions in multiple sites of art R/research, and offers up the third space as another entry point into this debate. For example, the inconsistent capitalization of some key terms, including “Research”, “Thesis” and “Knowledge”, highlights their contextual significance in art Research. While “thesis” can refer to a main idea (the

5 Alongside the other implications of the meaning of the word “legend” we are using it specifically with regards to one of its meanings, which can be found in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (2007): “A written explanation accompanying an illustration, map, *etc.*”

thesis of a presentation, for instance), it takes on particular significance when the Thesis is understood as the seat of the Researcher's original claim to Knowledge. This selective capitalization of terms thus signals their contextual specificity. At the same time it aims to acknowledge other meanings these terms may convey. Similarly, repetition is used structurally, metaphorically and mimetically – as a manner of angling through the same questions from different positions. It also serves to subtly enquire into how repetition might be a way of marking sameness and difference, as a form of establishing a system of knowing – how our tacit/legible approach to K/knowledge productions can be instrumental in practice-based art Research methods. Bearing in mind hygienic, orderly Research is not necessarily the only way to effectively research (Law 2007), we argue for a messy approach, one that acknowledges that which it denies, the aspects that are subsumed, cleaned up, left in a notebook, and so on.

### *I. Content*

A particular type of question propels PhD Research – the Thesis question. The “question” resides in the linguistic, whereas “response” can speak in and through the linguistic and beyond: the verbal, the body and the object. The ongoing dialogue between the practices of art and/as Research raises many concerns, some of which transcend the Thesis question. What, for example, are the languages of the art Thesis? When is art R/research? And where is the Knowledge in the art PhD?

A question among questions in art Research, the Thesis question is a pointer, the arrow with which the researcher seeks new Knowledge. It casts the inquiry in many directions, all the while wondering, “Is Research really about asking the ‘right’ questions?” For The Art of Research Seminar, we explored “the question” not only as a



retorical structure but also as a theme, a theory and a thesis. It served to organize both the content and form of our performative paper. We asked and (re)asked the questions above through a combination of written surveys, straw polls and a thought experiment aimed at facilitating a site-specific discussion about the growing discourse of art Research. We sought to highlight The Art of Research Seminar as a context for our speculative R/research – to activate the academic conference as a performative event where notions of art Research are socially constructed. At the same time, we aimed to talk around, about and through art Research using language(s) better suited for enacting art as Research. In addition to written and read argumentation, we deployed cryptic gestures and curious equations, addressing, in effect, Umberto Eco's observations about artistic intention:

The moment an artist realizes that the system of communication at his disposal is extraneous to the historical situation he wants to depict, he must also understand that the only way he will be able to solve this problem is through the invention of new formal structures that will embody that situation and become its model. (1989, 143)

Future Response aspired to be such a model – an alternative to conventional Research process and product. Yet, for reasons discussed below, this model did not register as either art or Research at the Seminar. Future Response was instead received as a non-communicative text where metaphors were mixed, voices became louder and softer, and positions slipped and fixed<sup>6</sup>.

6 It is this slipping and fixing between territories that we are interested in confusing, blurring and merging in order to perform a notion, the third space, to define how divergent possibilities might appear in reaching an expanded understanding of how art R/research works. We will define the third space as a multiple space of meaning and ambig-

As a collaborative project – a shared investigation among the members of Future Reflections Research Group – Future Response considered response in the context of reflexive dialogue, by which we mean dialogue as a kind of collaboration in keeping with the curator and critic Maria Lind's notion of "triple collaboration" (2007, 27). She defines triple collaboration as instances where the subject of the work, the theme itself, is collaboration. Discussion around this theme raised two questions in particular. "What does response mean in the context of art," we wondered "and in what ways can response be understood as art Research in its own right?" As the form/process/method/outcome, response enabled the project's collaborative and interdisciplinary making and set up our enquiry into investigating the third space.

Sir Christopher Frayling (1993) made a distinction between Research and research in his paper "Research in Art and Design" – based on the definition found in the Oxford English Dictionary. He defines research with a lowercase "r" as an investigation, the act of searching, whereas Research with an uppercase "R" indicates some kind of development. Future Reflections Research Group explores if other distinctions between big and small letters in a word can equally illustrate conventions in terms of our understanding of these terms. For instance, can Knowledge with a capital "K" refer to the original Knowledge claim built into the PhD? The PhD has to produce new knowledge. This is argued in and through the Thesis, (capital T), itself a dissertation based on an original claim to Knowledge, which may contain more than one thesis, *i.e.* propositions advanced as an argument. Frayling furthermore defines art as Re-

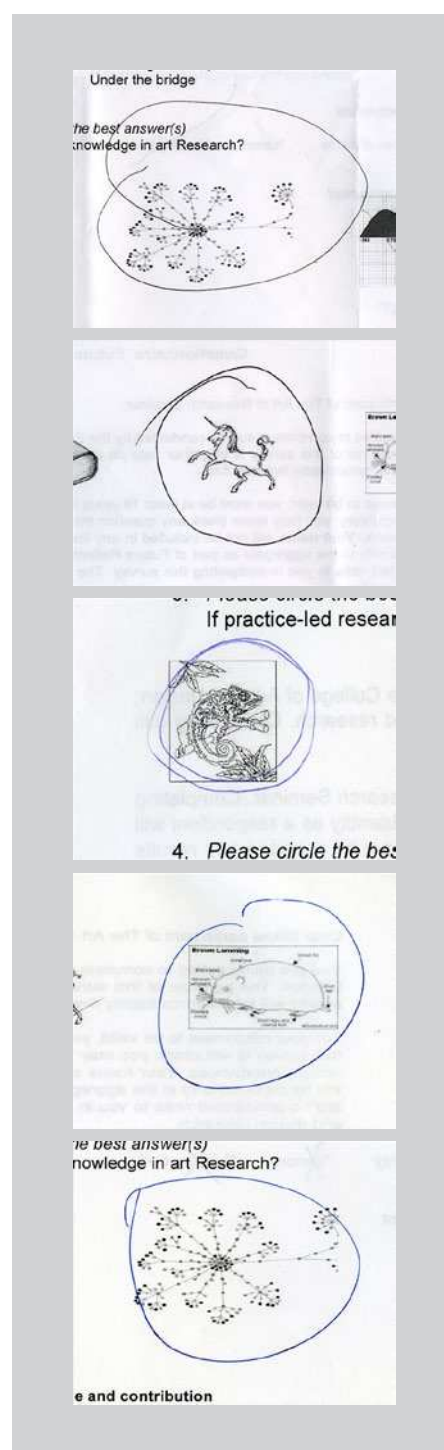
ity, an ambiguity from which another form of knowledge production may emerge – and it is in this nuanced lack of clarity, the third space, that we will approach the practical implications of doing practice-based art R/research.

search where the methods and conventions and debates of Research can be seen to be embodied in the artwork itself.<sup>7</sup> Within the academic art and design community, Frayling undertook an important step towards understanding how the relationship between Research and art can be conceived. Future Reflections Research Group seem to be attempting to expand through their work what embodiment actually means in relation to art. As all of Frayling's definitions seem to presuppose the production of a discrete art object of some kind, a discursively located practice may represent a challenge to these categories.

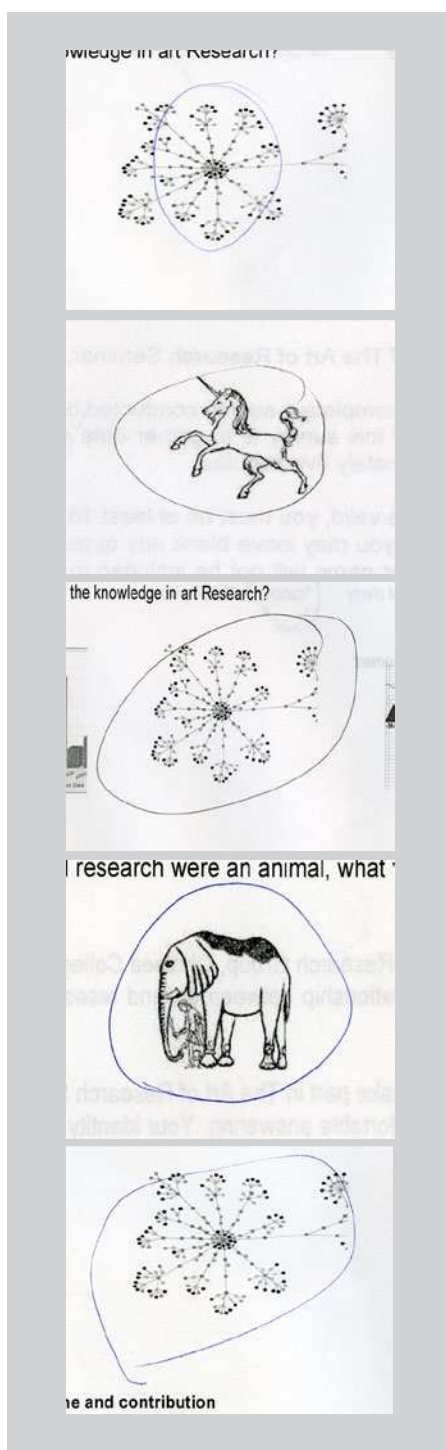
## II. Participation

Participation in the context of Future Response was understood as both an individual and collective engagement, on the one hand originating with the utterances of individual group members, and on the other, with the discourse of Future Reflections Research Group as a whole. Additionally, response resided with the other participants of The Art of Research Seminar, who contributed by completing written surveys, raising their hands in answer to straw polls, and participating in a thought experiment. If, however, we aimed to explore both the attendees' responses in the post-presentation discussion, the opaque structure of our presentation resisted easy access. Only later in informal aspects of the Seminar – in the coffee breaks and at the dinner – did the other attendees offer their feedback, feedback that has had a reflexive impact on our investigation. Addressing

7 Frayling refers to this kind of research as research for art. It is his third category following on from what he defines as: 1) research into art *i.e.* art historical research, and 2) research through art, where a problem is researched through the practices and mediums of art. According to Frayling the problems of art research are manifested in this third category, as the goal here may not primarily be communicable knowledge (1993, 5).







our commitment to developing languages better suited for expressing art as suppositional, they suggested other aesthetic strategies for proposing, performing and producing art R/research as a discursive event.

Future Reflections Research Group's performative presentation at the *Art of Research* seminar tracked and staged several emblematic problems with participation. These include confusing the audience about participatory expectations and leaving them to question the significance of the collaboration's contribution, with respect to how and what we were asking of them and the dissemination of their contributions. We attempted to engage attendees in our presentation through asking them to take part in straw polls, surveys and instructions using different kinds of language (written equations, spoken commands and physical gestures). These methods proved problematic, however, because they were coercively deployed. As we failed to build a relationship with the attendees before making demands of them, their participation was commanded rather than exchanged.

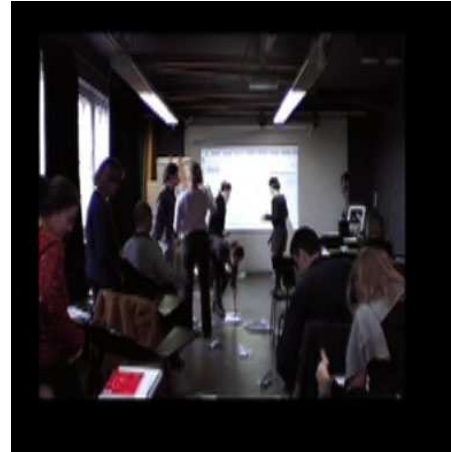
The resultant split between US (Future Reflections Research Group) and THEM (the audience) was further entrenched by our methods of data solicitation and collection. We asked the audience to give on several levels. We asked for both participation and information, and for the retention of the information for further analysis. However, the mode of giving, *e.g.* answers in the questionnaires, afforded only limited response, effectively frustrating more generative modes of two-way interaction. Instead of dialoguing with other Seminar participants, we inadvertently identified ourselves as our own audience. We spoke to one another about our shared interests and our discussion became increasingly insulated, esoteric and closed. We aimed to share our emerging language(s) – our experimental form and figurations – with our peers.



But we failed to also share literacy for interpreting these systems. Consequently, some of our propositions were lost in translation. The result: Future Response made (non)sense.

As a primarily discursive art practice, Future Reflections Research Group's process is, in effect, its product. This process is achieved through dialogue between the participants, and hence elaborates new understanding that is both shared and individual. Holding fast to dialogism as an ethic, a method and a practice, the core question becomes: How can we maintain this engagement in broader contexts, in sites like conferences that bring together interlocutors both within and without the group's immediate constituency? Our presentation at the Art of Research Seminar emphasized some of the challenges involved in inviting, exchanging, recording and interpreting audience participation. One of the many challenges we face involves producing a symbiotic relationship with the audience, a relationship that builds a diversified, interactive and communicative space – a symbiosis that encourages three forms of interaction simultaneously: 1) between members of the research group; 2) between the research group and members of the audience; and 3) between the audience members themselves. We believe that the third space provides a site for this triple interaction. As such, it offers a useful way of approaching what the third space constitutes – principally it is a site of diversified interactions.

While the theory and practice of participation remain under addressed in the discourse of art Research, questions around audience engagement can be located in concerns around "context," a topic that has received recent attention in various conferences and publications. For example, two questions explored at *Research into Practice* 2006 include: "Are certain types of context more research-friendly than others? Does research demand new types of context?" Michael Biggs



(2006b) addresses these concerns in an editorial for *Working Papers in Art and Design* by raising an even more critical question: "Is the medium a context?" We know the medium affects the message (McLuhan and Fiore 1971) but is the medium constitutive of the research message?" While Biggs is immediately concerned with how writing about Research serves to historically and critically contextualize its outputs, his questions, considered alongside those identified above, gesture towards some of the challenges facing Research into discursive art practice. That this type of practice assumes an artwork's significance can reside in an event, a site-specific engagement through which new understanding is socially constructed, means discursive art challenges orthodox notions of art Research as something intrinsic and self-contained in the output as an object. Miwon Kwon (2004) has theorized this kind of radical reconsideration in relation to some contemporary art practices by articulating the concept of discursive site-specific practice, where site is understood as a mobile discursive narrative.<sup>8</sup> A site within this discursive understanding can be an artistic genre, a social cause, *etc.*; it can be literal like a street corner, or virtual like a theoretical concept. Understanding Art R/research as a site specific practice may be helpful.

### III. Knowledge

Assuming that both Knowledge and knowledge(s) resist insinuating themselves exclusively in one place, like in the practice, in the written Thesis or in the artwork, where and how are they dispersed throughout the PhD? Dialogue offers a productive

metaphor for describing the interplay between systems of knowing. Dialogue between the R/research and the artwork provides a construction site for K/knowledge(s) (Kvale 1996), a place where new understanding is built. Defining the relationship between R/research and the artwork as dialogic, however, is not without problems, among them locating, articulating, and disseminating the discrete Knowledge claim. Nevertheless, overcoming these problems has performative potential. By resisting the urge to pin Knowledge down in one place, a dialogic understanding of K/knowledge(s) can open up a richer conversation, a conversation between the outcomes, the process and the product, that would be suppressed if these constituents were not given voice. Ultimately, for the art PhD, the claim to original Knowledge must take the form of an articulated utterance: the Thesis.

As discussed above, the Thesis question directs the investigation. The Thesis proposition, however, must respond to the Thesis question by silencing the incoherent babblings of its research (with a lowercase "r"). It must articulate a cogent, concise and above all clearly legible statement of Research (with an uppercase "R"). This is because to be heard the Knowledge claim must be read. That is, it must be readable; meaning, accessible. "The judgement and classification of a work as [R]eseach is a judgement that is made by the audience and is an issue of its reception, rather than being determined by the intention of the "author"" (Biggs 2006a). This emphasis on audience raises critical concerns about "reading" art as R/research, underscoring the need for alternative literacies to facilitate more complex and subtly nuanced interpretation (Laakso 2006). Ideally, these new literacies will allow greater scope for the art to expand within the art PhD. They will also override the historical preoccupation with reducing Research to a single Knowledge claim characterized by clarity,

8 This is Kwon's third category of site-specific practice. She proposes a genealogy of site-specific practice which moves from architectural/phenomenological, to institutional - *i.e.* forms of institutional critique to discursive, which as a category builds on James Meyer's idea of a functional site (1995).

specificity and un-equivocality. They will structure outcomes in ways that more accurately embody art as speculative investigation. Finally, they will validate creative practice – rather than product – as both a point of departure and return for understanding and application.

As Future Reflections Research Group's contribution to this ongoing discussion, we assert the possibility of an in-between – a third space – an overlap of these areas. Similar to that which Turkka Keinonen defines as “the third field” (FX), this common ground is comprised of practices, methods and values shared by art and R/research (Keinonen 2006, 53).

Foregrounding these themes, this text splices across and through questions as a linguistic structure to wrestle with response as a way of addressing issues related to art R/research. This reflective/reflexive inquiry serves to locate sources of dialogue occurring in/around/through the PhD, sources from which fluctuating meaning(s) and/or K/knowledge(s) speak. Another distinction explored here concerns art and Research as separate fields. The questions, “Can Research be art and can art be Research?” asked before the Seminar through several email surveys were also performatively enacted at our presentation of Future Response. These exchanges thus incised a line of inquiry across this project, which, upon reflection, traces the emergent epistemology of our collaborative process. In Future Response, we also attempted to conjure up the third space as a discursive site for conversation about mis/understanding and reflection as methods for generating discussion. By asking and re-asking the same questions in the paper/presentation/surveys, we intuited the third space, a space between the individual and the collective, between understanding and misunderstanding, between the articulated and the unarticulated. In this liminal zone, afforded by our collaborative practice, the relationship between indi-

vidual and collective moves in the gap that opens up in the discourse between our individual R/research interests and our common pursuits. This is a dialogic space of possibilities, working in the push and pull between the singular and the shared, through a polyphony of voices; ours and our fellow researchers in this emergent field, collectively undertaking this journey into art R/research. By locating the third space between positions, comprehensibility and utterances, we site the construction of these in the overlap, in the crossover as an “inter” space. Dialogues emerging from this space encourage miss/understanding as a profoundly disconcerting, albeit potentially productive outcome, of art Research.

Knowledge(s) occupy multiple socio-cultural and/or historical contexts (Scrivener 2002); however, the privileging of a singular Knowledge is a significant aspect of the PhD project, as a model of mastery towards Research (as understood with a capital “R”). Whilst recognizing the institutional expectation of a new Knowledge claim in the PhD, there may be some potential to posit other possibilities for valid R/research. Future Reflections Research Group has proposed an alternative space – the third space, towards an exploration across K/knowledge(s) and their contexts. Is it possible to trace the third space in other theories/writings? This space is not, as it seems, the same thing as the “Thirdspace” outlined by Edward W. Soja (1996). Soja's “Thirdspace” is an attempt to understand the spatial turn in critical studies, and the book constitutes a re-evaluation of what Soja sees as the dual approach of seeing spatiality as concrete material forms on the one hand and as mental constructs on the other. Thus, the third space and “Thirdspace” seem to share a common interest in creating alternative approaches to conceptualizing relationships between that which exists materially and the language, concepts and methods we use to discuss this. The third space as proposed by

Future Reflections Research Group is seemingly inclined towards exploring productive messes and confusions. As such it is consistently concerned with being a space that is tertiary – third. This may be a notable classification, and furthermore one that shares similarities with a humanities Research model, which also concerns itself with the issue of the third, namely – the Third Way (Navarro 2002). The “Third Way” as a method is structured through having two discourses that are put together; this pairing creates another way, a third way to enter into a discourse. Thus the third space may cautiously resonate with other work that puts forward alternative models of understanding and knowledge, but seems specific to the discussion of art R/research, as a method and/or as a metaphor.

#### EXIT/EXODUS

George Bataille (2001) discusses arriving at knowledge as a service to the sovereign operation, in which knowledge is privileged and masks the unknown. He describes the instance where the known departs from the unknown, and the dangers of remaining in the moment where the split of mis/understanding occurs.

Some consequences of such usage of thoughts proceed in another way from the possibility of misunderstanding: knowledge relating objects to the sovereign moment in the end risks being confounded with the moment itself.

This knowledge that one could call free (but that I [Bataille] prefer to call neutral) is the use of a function detached (free) from the servitude that is its principal: the function related the unknown to the known (to the solid), whereas dating it from the moment when it detaches itself, it relates the known to the unknown. (2001, 93)

In many ways, the third space comprises this moment of movement between the known and the unknown, seeking to privilege this relationship as constituting un/Knowing (k/Knowing and not knowing) as processes that cannot be pulled apart from each other. The third space avoids privileging either state, be this knowing or not. Working against the hierarchy of Knowledge as an absolute, it offers up other possibilities for residencies of knowledge(s). The third space acknowledges the absent – the unknown – as a valid and essential process of knowing and vice versa. The un/known necessitates an equal positioning – not shoulder to shoulder, but as simultaneously merged, collapsed and interspersed throughout each other. We conceptualize the third space as a mobile space of the un/Known(s), where the un/Known[s] vie and collaborate together and develop each other. The third space is mechanized as a productive site to enable indistinguishable forms of un/knowledge or ways of un/knowing to emerge,

Linguistically conjuring up the third space in/through this text as an inter-space is a rhetorical endeavour aimed at articulating this poetic realm as an elliptical or non-Euclidian space. Rhetorical practice and artistic practice both work with forms (Nyrnes 2000). Future Reflections Research Group takes into its service the forms of language as an aesthetic possibility, a proposition to develop a rhetoric of the third space. This rhetoric may function as both an itinerary of the journey ahead and a trace of the ground covered.

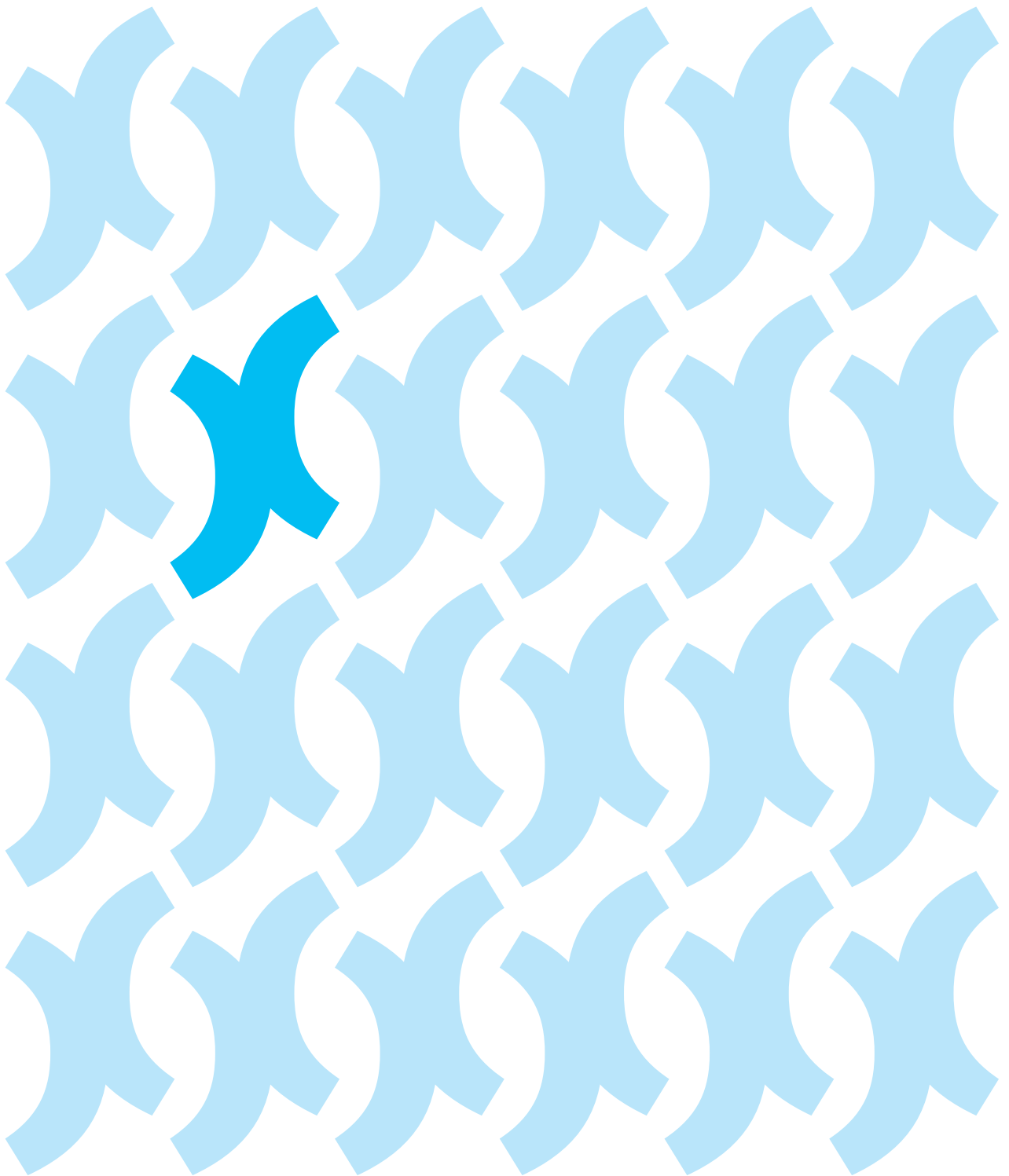
As the third space does not appear to have clear boundaries or definitive qualities that can easily be described, perhaps we can link the articulation of this space to the need for new literacy as expressed by Laakso (2006). Artists articulate this need in, through and around their practices. For instance, Art & Language talk about a “competent regard” for an artwork in much the same way that an “adequate reading” of a text enables one to “recover meaning” from it (O’Riley 2007). K/knowledge(s)

in the Art PhD need reflexive literacy and competent regard in order for art R/research to contribute, on its own terms, to a broader discussion around R/research and K/knowledge production.

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**Appendix B:** Bradfield, Marsha and Hjelde, Katrine, 'Future Reflections future (re) composition', *Art Monitor* 8, 2010.



## Future reflections

## Future (re)composition

Marsha Bradfield & Katrine Hjelde

### Abstract

In October 2009, Future Reflections Research Group presented *Future (Re) Composition* at The Art Text symposium in Gothenburg, Sweden.

Through this performative presentation, the group represented by Marsha Bradfield and Katrine Hjelde endeavoured to embody as well as problematise the interrelations between what is often termed 'the practical' and 'the written' aspects of art research outcomes. Staged as a dialogue, the following discussion synthesises the version of *Future (Re)Composition* presented at The Art Text with reflective/reflexive commentary informed by conversations occurring in/around/through this research event. The concept of hybridity anchors this dialogue, providing a focus for exploring three areas of practice in Future Reflections: notions of site, perceptual tensions between individual collaborators and the group as a whole, and questions around audience related to sending out and receiving texts, namely: writing, speaking, showing and reading collaborative art research. Negotiating these areas through dialogue, this collaboratively authored text models an approach for representing collaborative art research.



### Introduction

On the 9th of October 2009, Future Reflections Research Group<sup>1</sup> presented Future (Re)Composition at The Art Text symposium in Gothenburg, Sweden. Through this performative presentation, the group, represented by Marsha Bradfield and Katrine Hjelde, endeavoured to performatively embody as well as problematise the interrelations between what is often termed 'the practical' and 'the written' aspects of art research outcomes. Staged as a dialogue between Bradfield and Hjelde, the following discussion synthesises the version of Future (Re)Composition presented at the Art Text with reflective/reflexive<sup>2</sup> commentary informed by conversations occurring in/around/through this research event.

### Part 1: Setting the scene

1. Future Reflections is a research group based at Chelsea College of Art and Design comprising of three PhD students, each undertaking a practice-based fine art PhD.
2. Future Reflections *reflects* on its collaborative art research through ongoing self-observation as a way of tracking and calibrating the group's practice. The collaboration is also *reflexive*, with its practice bending back on itself. The papers and presentations are self-referential, engaging Joseph Kosuth's sense that: "Art, it can be argued, *describes* reality. But, unlike language, artworks – it can be argued--simultaneously describe how they describe it." *Art After Philosophy and After: Collected Writings*, 1966-1990 (London: MIT Press, 2002), 247.

Two artist researchers, two laptops (Macs), two projectors (rented/borrowed for the occasion by the organisers), two grey coats, two mirror badges, two PowerPoint presentations using text and image, one paper, read/presented in turn, a chair, Mick Wilson Dean of Gradcam, Dublin, an international audience consisting of approximately one third of the delegates to the symposium and a grand, but not the grandest room in Dicksonska Palatset, the venue hosting the symposium on behalf of Valand School of Fine Art, university of Gothenburg.

### Part 2: Dialogue

**Katrine Hjelde:** Over the last three years, Future Reflections has explored collaborative art research through a series of eight projects aimed at establishing a reciprocal practice of art as research and research as art. These projects have largely comprised performative presentations for art research conferences, as well as papers for publication, where the group presents itself as a case study of collaborative art research. Through these presentations and papers, Future Reflections has considered specific methods, sensibilities and outcomes that characterize collaborative art production. In particular, the group has observed a growing body of tacit

knowledge contouring its activities. If this body is composed of diverse perceptions and expectations, each member of the group holds these to different degrees and in different ways.

**Marsha Bradfield:** Intent on surfacing and engaging with this knowledge, Future Reflections engages in group discussions aimed at building common ground among individual members.

**KH:** Through these discussions, we aim to identify shifts in our perceptions of past work and new and emergent understandings of our shared research, understandings that alter the group's self-understanding and, by extension, its self-representation in performative papers/presentations like this one.

**MB:** Based on the benefits we gain by recalibrating our research through group discussion, we contend there's a real need for verbal and visual texts that more effectively demonstrate this process, a process that's often effaced in collaboratively written texts intent on disseminating research outcomes. Our aim here is to experiment with representing what normally occurs 'off the page' in the production of such texts. For it's our sense this kind of exchange is foundational to collaborative writing about collaborative research.

**KH:** Hence our contribution here aims to inscribe and enact the material practice of dialogue as the foundation for integrative art collaboration.

**MB:** Following Patricia Montiel-Overall's typology of collaborative structures, integrative collaboration is marked by shared thinking, shared planning and

shared creation.<sup>3</sup> Collaborators work together to produce in ways that are beyond their individual capabilities.

**KH:** An important aspect of our work as Future Reflections involves understanding just what this kind of collaboration entails. What are we doing? How are we doing it? What are the distinguishing features of collaborative research marked by an integrative approach? What do we gain from working together? What do we lose? What are some of the challenges and possibilities of representing this shared knowledge enterprise?

**MB:** One approach we've found useful for tackling these questions involves what might be termed a 'subject-specific discussion,' which is what we aim to model here.

**KH:** The subject of this discussion is hybridity. For The Art Text we introduced this concept and tried to establish how notions of hybridity can be seen to operate in our collaboration, specifically as a way of negotiating our practice in three particular respects: notions of site, tensions between the perceptions of individual collaborators and the group as a whole, and questions around audience related to sending out/receiving texts, namely: writing, speaking, showing and reading collaborative art research.

**MB:** Deciding that as a conceptual frame, hybridity has heuristic value for not only understanding but representing our collaborative art research, this dialogue concludes by speculating about the literacies involved in authoring art research texts, both as writers and readers.

3. Patricia Montiel-Overall, "A Theoretical Understanding of Teacher and Library Collaboration," *School Libraries World Wide*, vol. 11 (2005).

## Part 2.1: Hybridity



**KH:** According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word “hybrid” comes from the Latin “hybrida”, meaning the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar. So on the one hand, the term involves biological mixing. On the other, it involves cultural combining.

**MB:** (Re)focusing Future Reflections artistic research through the lens of hybridity, I'm struck by the potential of this idea for identifying points of contact and combination in the practice...including tensions between.

**KH:** But before exploring specific tensions, it seems important to say a little more about the conceptual history of hybridity.

**MB:** Alright.

**KH:** From its beginnings, this term has expressed anxiety around otherness. Although the Oxford English Dictionary tells us the word ‘hybridity’ first appeared in the 17th century, it wasn't until later, in anxious discussions around racial mixing in the 18th and 19th centuries, that usage proliferated.

In addition to referencing an animal offspring, a hybrid also designated ‘the child of a freeman and slave’. Hence the discourse of hybridity has long circumscribed a fear of difference.

**MB:** And addressing this fear has shaped the development of hybridity as an idea.

**KH:** Yes, the concept was reappropriated and recuperated in discussions around identity politics in the 1980s and 90s, with Homi Bhabha's post-colonial discourse being pivotal in this respect. Bhabha identified hybridity as the process by

which the coloniser tries to negotiate the identity of the colonised into an overarching perspective. But the colonised's resistance to translation produces something familiar but also distinct. Bhabha contends the resulting hybrid promotes ambivalence and, by extension, alters the balance of power.<sup>4</sup>

**MB:** With the ebbing of post-colonial studies, the term hybridity appears ripe for redeployment and, mindful of the concept's complex history, it seems this noun/adjective/verb could be useful for perceiving Future Reflections' practice beyond either/or thinking, beyond binaries, to animate the tensions among the researchers' different points of view.

**KH:** As well as between their research as art and text.

## Part 2.2: Beyond individual/group

**MB:** Returning to Bhabha's idea that negotiating identity produces ambivalence and recalling his sense that the colonised's resistance to assimilation results in something familiar but different, the issue of power again comes to the fore. Who or what is colonising whom or what in the context of Future Reflections and what kinds of ambivalence does this produce?

**KH:** One way of addressing this question is by thinking about the colonisation of concepts in collaboration. While some concepts are introduced by individual members, informed by their respective research, others are developed by the group. Either way, the concepts develop through collaboration. They evolve as the group thinks them together and puts the concepts into practice. It is notable, perhaps, that the opinions I hold as a member of Future Reflec-

tions often differ from those exercised in my individual research, and yet these two practices feed off one another.

**MB:** This idea that concepts are colonised fascinates me, that they are concurrently occupied by both individuals and the group. It's perhaps significant that nothing resembling territories has arisen in Future Reflections. It's not so much about such-and-such being mine and such-and-such being yours, about linking authorship and ownership. What instead emerges is a kind of shared subjectivity: a group self fashioned through collaboration. Perhaps 'group selves' is a better metaphor? Either way, this self/selves, this hybrid subjectivity, is never unitary; there is no homunculus directing our actions, no coordinating agent at the centre of Future Reflections.

**KH:** No, and nor is this self/selves always visible. I glimpse it/them most often when we attempt to narrate our practice by piecing together the fragments of our experience. This story, however, is always partial in the same way the Future Reflections' self/selves is never unitary and only visible from time to time.

**MB:** Before considering this issue of narration, it strikes me there's an important point to be made about this hybrid self/selves as evolving from collaboration as itself a hybrid enterprise. Future Reflections' self-organisation as a flat hierarchy is indicative in this regard.

**KH:** Yes, although we agree in principle on this form of self-governance, how it structures our activities is never given. In practice, this involves constantly negotiating the desires, needs, sensibilities of individual members and those of the group as a whole.

4. Homi Bhabha, "Introduction: Locations of Culture," in *The Location of Culture*. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 1-28.

**MB:** This is a pivotal if obvious point. There's never an exact fit between the needs of individual members and the needs of the group and recalibrating these differences is an ongoing process in collaborative practice.

Let me (briefly) illuminate this point via Mikhail Bakhtin's sense that language, and by extension meaning, is always shaped through tensions between monologic and dialogic forces. While monologic forces, often servicing overarching agendas, like those of the state or religion, seek to standardise or unify meaning by presenting a definitive point of view, dialogic forces aim to rupture this Truth (with a capital "T") by presenting different points of view, different perspectives.<sup>5</sup>

**KH:** Your comment alludes to the tension between the monologic tendency of a group position in Future Reflections, which aspires to be shared and coherent, and the dialogic impulse of the group's members... your, mine and Catherine's desire to advance our individual agendas and address our respective concerns.

**MB:** Yes, but 'showing' this tension in representations of collaborative art research is a very difficult thing to do. Or at least it's proven difficult to demonstrate in ways that are accessible and meaningful to an external audience.

**KH:** While I think we all have different perceptions of Future Reflections' research and in this way we agree to disagree, we also, I believe, each of us, and in our own way, has an uneasy relationship with what we have been referring to as a group position. Even though we all author this position, I do not feel a lot of ownership of it and this is partly because it...

**MB:** It embodies 'the voice of FR', but I'm interrupting you.

**KH:** As you were saying, we have come to refer to the group's shared position as the 'the voice of FR'. And this voice can, in important ways, be compared to what Charles Green calls "the third hand" in collaboration. However, in contrast to Green's sense that a group's collaborative identity is greater than the sum of the identities of its individual members,<sup>6</sup> it is my sense the voice of the FR is not more but less...

**MB:** This seems related to your earlier point about narration and partiality. In the same way the group's accounts are always partial, our common narrator, the voice of FR, is always emergent. So it is kind of placeholder, which helps, I think, to explain why invites ambivalence. This voice demands we constantly re-examine how it represents the group and how this representation meshes with our own perceptions.

**KH:** Perhaps it's more productive to think about 'the voice of FR' as evidence of a phantom collaborator to whom we personally feel an ambivalent sense of responsibility.

**MB:** Yes, I find myself speaking in this voice as I describe Future Reflections to anyone beyond the group, to an external audience.

**KH:** And I believe I do this because although I know I am always speaking from a specific and situated position as just one member of Future Reflections, it nevertheless seems important to be able to speak on behalf of the group, to be able to articulate a shared experience.

5. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

6. Charles Green, *The Third Hand: Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2001).

**MB:** But in the same instant I recognize myself ventriloquising the voice of FR, I'm reminded of the tension between Future Reflections' group position and the members' respective position(s) and how the incongruity of these perspectives shapes the various understandings at play in this research.

**KH:** This suggests a parallel to me: moving between individual and group positions and moving between an art practice and written reports on this practice.

**MB:** You're thinking of reflections, descriptions and theoretical elaborations of this practice in written form?

**KH:** Yes. Increasingly, there are artists who produce art writing, art as writing, and Future Reflections has experimented with this approach. But there are many others who write *about* their practice. This entails translating their practice into a different medium. What often results is a kind of split object: there is the practice and there is a written representation of the practice and instead of being complimentary, they end up compromising each other.

**MB:** This partly depends, I think, on a question of fidelity. If the artist views writing about her practice as a kind of betrayal that must be committed to fulfil an institutional requirement, then silos of activity are inevitable. If, however, she understands both the practice and the writing as creative expression, or writing as an extension of art practice... Well, new opportunities begin to emerge, opportunities for experimenting with the 'artness' of the research as spread across artwork/practice and writing. It strikes me this hybrid model has profound implications for art research. It could provide a way of situating art-as-research as a particular kind of cultural production.

### Part 2.3: Site

**KH:** Perhaps another example of hybridity in Future Reflections will indicate other ways that art research can accommodate diverse aspects. I am thinking here of the unfolding of Future Reflection's performative presentations in time and space.

**MB:** Yes, The Art Text symposium is an interesting example in this regard. As a university initiative located in a former palace, it comprised a complex site for interaction and understanding, a kind of hybrid event.





**KH:** Indeed, to engineer a hybrid *space* can be seen as an attempt to locate a *new site* for the activities of artistic research. The magnificent building hosting the Art Text event, the Dicksonska Palatset, is not like an art school studio, malleable and transformable. It is a space that will assert itself, formally, historically and politically. The territory of the Palace is here operating as a temporary hybridised site for the activities of discussing a particular aspect of art research, art as writing, what we can call the written art text. As participants/presenters we have had to adapt to this space, literally work around it, within it, colonising it.

**MB:** Of course, the site of art research will (like all research) always operate in relation to contexts, artistic, institutional etc.

**KH:** Yes, it may seem very obvious to state this, but as an artist researcher, I am interested in how these temporal hybrid sites offer up the potential for a particular kind of *work*, how they mirror or divert our shared/individual anxieties and ambivalences about the activity of art research as art writing and how a place like Dicksonska Palatset lends a form of authority, through its history and opulence, to this undertaking, for us and for the event as a whole.

We ask: What is the *site* of representation for art research? If it is writing, what is this writing? Where is this writing? Future Reflections starts with the artistic research conference as a main signifying context for the group's work, we proceed to engage with this signifying context through what Miwon Kwon<sup>7</sup> would call a discursive site-specific practice. The conference site, this conference site was very much situated, physically in the Dicksonska palatset, institutionally through Valand School of Fine Art - Gothenburg University, and discursively through art research/art writing.

7. Miwon Kwon has outlined a genealogy of site-specific practice, from physical, phenomenological, institutional to discursive. Discursive site-specific practice is not dependent on a physical site, but operates through sites, making these sites functional. Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another Site specific Art and Locational Identity* (US: MIT Press, 2004).

**MB:** Yet we can also think of the conference as distributed. It's inscribed in the papers, for instance, that compose this edition *ArtMonitor*, with the publication extending the conference outside of the event itself, echoing the event, absorbing it to some degree, but taking on a life of its own.

**KH:** The work of art research, particularly through art writing is an ongoing negotiation of boundaries, (sometimes even seen as boundary contraventions), in terms of academic disciplines, as Henk Borgdorff has pointed out<sup>8</sup>. The negotiation of boundaries that we have to do through art research causes tension, anxiety for the individual and the institution, authorities becomes ambivalent through the constant shifts across boundaries. Hybrids can show up boundaries for what they are, mostly arbitrary and institutional delineations of carving up knowledge(s) and its associated power.

**MB:** Johan Öberg said something after our presentation that seems related to this point. He observed our paper seemed to originate in a particular "regime".

**KH:** Future Reflection is indeed situated in relation to a regime, all of us who have been involved with Future Reflections are PhD students at Chelsea (part of Chelsea, Camberwell, Wimbledon Graduate School). Being explicit about our regime is a way to hold up how we are a particular construct articulated in conjunction between our individual interests, our group interests as well as the institutional parameters that we operate within. Institutionally there is always a regime, this is undeniable and unavoidable. However we are not so much involved with an institutional critique of University of the Arts, London or of UK-style

art research, although this has come into our work and into the reading of the work, but we are more concerned with articulating the hybridized graft points where what we do is directly or indirectly a response to the institutional site of UAL and discursive site of art research. As there is always a regime, articulating one regime allows others to come into relief also.

## Part 2.4: Reflection

**MB:** So far we have used hybridity as a lens to look at the individual/group relationship and the ways in which Future Reflections negotiates various sites. But can we discuss this in terms of method at all – and should we?

**KH:** Art Research is a hybrid between different traditions in and of art and research. In terms of method, one way to advance, to grasp, or to work directly with this hybrid of art research, is to use reflection.

**MB:** Yes, but reflection is a complex subject. Recall Mick Wilson's comment following our presentation. He seemed to be asking: Are there some forms of reflection that go nowhere beyond a narcissistic act? Are they dead ends? He said and we agree, I think, that reflection is *not* what differentiates art research from art. So what exactly do we gain from reflection in art research?

**KH:** I still think reflection has potential here, but we have to be careful as to how we use it, and how we do not use it. Articulating reflection as a kind of discreet zone serves to entrench the binary of art and research, in a way that is perhaps less productive for the field. Writing becomes reduced to that which binds them together. Perhaps reflection is something that distinguishes the art text?

8. In a paper given at Sensuous Knowledge 6 Conference in Bergen 2009.

**MB:** But before we start down that route, it's worth recalling that *reflection* is a fluid term and has no agreed meaning. It is heavily involved with the discourses of pedagogy as well as with some schools of philosophy, (like hermeneutics). And reflection is mostly inscribed with a *purpose*, but one which needs to be defined/refined in each instance.

**KH:** Often referred to in artistic research is Donald Schön, who has coined the term reflection-in-action for what he sees as the ongoing kind of reflection that practitioners of all kinds (doctors to artist) undertake. His notion of reflection-in-action relates to problem solving, to "thinking on ones feet", and it is coupled with reflection-on-action, reflection after the event<sup>9</sup>. Reflection in and on action essentially relates to learning, and as a way to validate practice based knowledge within academia.

**MB:** It is worth acknowledging, I think, some of the questions we ask of ourselves in our collaborative practice. We wonder, for instance, does collaborative art research prompt a different kind of reflection than that undertaken by an individual artist on his/her individual practice? Assuming it does, do we manage to represent this type of reflection in our research outcomes? Addressing these questions in a substantial way lies beyond the scope of this dialogue. But what we *can* say is that Future Reflections' practice encourages a different kind of reflection to, for instance, reflection in/on action. It's different, I think, because it doesn't instrumentalise reflection in such an immediate way. It's not so much about making a claim or verifying knowledge. It's about creating a space for group introspection that's playful and emergent. We never quite know what will arise, if anything

**KH:** Thus reflection/reflexion can be seen as intrinsic to many kinds of art practice, and not just as a discursively based, after the event, confession. We understand our way of working, writing and making as *self-reflective*.

**MB:** By which you mean it's a way of working that self-consciously mirrors its own image and explicitly reflects both the construction and function of the research process in the research outcomes.

**KH:** Yes -this allows for a *reflexive* approach where both the art and the writing continually attempt to turn back on themselves, not just as a hall of mirrors but as a *way to engage with the construction of the constitute parts in this endeavour* for instance as an expanded art writing. Reflexivity in art practice opens up the work, as opposed to closing it down through a kind of verification. The performative presentation in Gothenburg was an attempt to enact a particular kind of reflection/reflexion between the art researchers, the text and the image and the distribution of both through technology sited within the academic institution. This form of reflexion makes for a distributed artwork, which replaces the art object as such with both different kinds of institutional frames whilst drawing attention to these, as well as frames that relate to, for instance, technology used. The reflexive open-ended artwork, however, can cause anxiety in art research terms as it will not conform to the authority of verified research.

**MB:** Because we produce our work collaboratively, we're always reflectively and reflexively relating to one another's input. Of course this process causes misunderstanding and misinterpretation from time to time. The dialogic forms that we have favoured (between group members, between image/text, between dif-

9. Donald Schön *The Reflective Practitioner. How professionals think in action* (London: Temple Smith, 1983).

ferent kinds of technologies and distributions) explore these misunderstandings and misinterpretations in an attempt to establish common ground between us. I think we try to make visible the seams and grafts between the elements of our research as a hybrid enterprise by critically tracing where the development of our shared knowledges. This strikes me as something different from narcissism, which is more characterised by a non-questioning, non-critical reflection.

### Part 3: Conclusion – Towards new literacies

**KH:** Yes, but perhaps narcissism still has something to offer, but that is another discussion. We have to finish here now. Conclusions do not sit well with an idea of opening up the work, so instead let us try to round up by suggesting a direction for future writing in/as art research.



**MB:** This raises for me the question of literacies. Developing new literacies, new ways of reading and writing art and art research, entails a two-step process. First, there's the challenge of questioning the conventions of the written research text, and this involves unpicking what Foucault would call its 'discursive formations,' i.e. fields of statements that constitute<sup>10</sup> their objects through various tactics, including, in the case of research, the holy grail of objectivity. Art researchers are already doing this by writing in ways that bridge binaries, like the verbal and visual (and by extension, reading and looking) and the monologic and the dialogic. But this is only the beginning. Evolving from this critique, the second stage involves developing alternative literacies, reflexive literacies that acknowledge the terms of their representation as performative, as actually producing the objects of their research.

10 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Oxon: Routledge, 1989).

**KH:** Not only performative, I would say, but also accessible. For these literacies need to be expressive *and* communicative. It is a mistake, I think, to accept that one characteristic comes at the expense of the other. The challenge is to approach both in a spirit of ambivalence and do more rather than less. Instead of either producing an expressive text or a communicative one, art research needs to develop forms that hybridize the two and create texts that signify in rich, complex and unexpected ways.



**Appendix C:** Katrine Hjelde 'Between Fine Art and Teaching: Reflecting Creative Passion', in Noam Austerlitz (ed.) *Unspoken Interaction: Exploring the Role of Emotions and Social Interactions in Art and Design Education*, CLTAD, 2008. 223-233.



6

Katrine Hjelde

Between fine art and teaching:  
reflecting creative passion

Author: Katrine Hjelde

Commentary: Rebecca Fortnum



Untitled 2006

Katrine Hjelde

Two way mirror glass installation with inkjet print H288x w 450x990x1260x220cm

Permanent installation for Holocaust Museum, Villa Grande, Oslo, Norway, with b+r architects

Photo: Matthew Flintham

**Keywords**

creative passion,  
fine art,  
reflective teaching

## Katrine Hjelde

### Introduction

This paper explores the role of creative passion in relation to fine art teaching and learning on student-focused courses, where tutor-student interactions are frequently based around the students' individual practice. It will examine how the tutor-student relationship in fine art is related not only to a sharing of practice but also to a sharing of emotions about the creative act. I will focus on the emotion of creative passion, how it is both a subjective emotion and also culturally/historically produced in relation to art and the role of the artist, and I will look at some consequences this has for teaching and learning.

As part of my ongoing PhD research, I have begun to explore how tutors' art practices come into their teaching and this paper will examine how this transfer has an emotional dimension. How the tutor conceives of his/her practice in emotional terms will also be related to how it is framed by the tutor within student-tutor interaction. Emotion is also explored here in relation to theories of reflective learning and teaching and this paper will look at two typical teaching and learning situations, the one-to-one tutorial and the group seminar; with this in mind.

### Creative passion

The emotion that I will focus on within these teaching and learning situations, is what we might call 'creative passion', for want of a better term, knowing full well that this emotion is what Ben Ze'ev (2000) refers to as a cluster emotion, an emotional resonance, which contains a number of related emotions like excitement, confusion, envy, etc.

Passion is defined as obsession, love, fervour and enthusiasm. Passion is the emotion of feeling very strongly about a subject or person. As a term it is mostly



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used in a romantic context, but equally it is a religious term denoting various forms of emotional suffering. Its etymology comes from the Latin *pati*, meaning to suffer or to endure (Oxford American Dictionary). Perhaps creative passion as a concept 'contains' both these meanings? Maybe an interesting question for art and design pedagogy is whether we can – or should – harness this dual understanding of passion?

After all, certain aspects of emotion in relation to visual art are a particular kind of historical construct, relating to the cliché of the tortured artist, in thrall of his/her emotions as a source of both aesthetic creations and experiences. This is a legacy from the Romantic era, and from this moment a cultural and hence personal and institutional expectation of passion within fine arts practice evolved. Following a constructivist approach, considering that we construct meaning from current knowledge structures, it seems necessary to mention these expectations also.

It is difficult to talk about emotion in teaching and learning. The word itself often conjures up something off-putting within the context of education, from boredom to humiliation, discomfort to despair. The educational experience is indeed emotional, and can include the emotions as listed above – but here I will focus on these and all other emotions as potentiality. Both negative and positive emotions can facilitate potentiality, meaning that not one kind of emotion is privileged in relation to learning. Thus the emotion of creative passion can be examined as a powerful tool towards facilitating a deeper experience of learning and reflective teaching and learning in fine art.

As an artist/teacher I will consider how theories associated with emotions can be interrelated to pedagogic theories of reflection, to explore one particular link between emotion and education. These theories can be used to explore emotion as a way to mobilise the potential for double loop learning that emotional involvement can facilitate. 'Double loop' is a term coined by Argyris and Schön (1973, cited in Brockbank & McGill, 2007, p. 50) to describe learning where assumptions are challenged and values can be transformed, leading to what they call potentially *paradigmatic* (2007) shifts in the learner. This builds on but leaves behind single loop learning, which although important with regards to gaining competence and confidence, leaves the underlying values of a theory unchanged. Double loop learning has been described as typical for postgraduate or mature undergraduate work. However, the critical nature of fine art practice and learning encourages students to undergo these shifts from early on in their course. As these learning shifts need emotion to enable this change, they may be unsettling

and problematic for the student, and may help explain why art students are, or are perceived to be, more emotional.

### Reflection in/on contemporary art practice/pedagogy

The relationship between contemporary art practice and pedagogy is not extensively written about, either with regards to emotion or in other terms. There is one exception to this, which is how fine art education is increasingly being held up as an ideal towards other kinds of education. This includes the idea of the 'art academy' being used as a model for other activities, like exhibitions and biennales (A.C.A.D.E.M.Y, Manifesta 6, Documenta 12, Frieze Art Fair) and why conferences like Summit Kein (2007) in Berlin focus on the potentiality of art schools in relation to education as a whole and as a platform for cultural actualisation and self-organisation within society. However, in these discussions any mention of an emotional aspect/dimension is largely absent, and this evasion is noteworthy. Why does even cutting-edge theory shy away from this area? The cognitive/emotional split is still underlying and informing these theoretical shifts, further entrenching the divide between what is seen as critical theory relating to education and what seems to be seen as the caretaker aspect of the role of the tutor and the institution.

Judith Carroll's research into the hidden frames of reference for artist/teachers, can be used to outline an alternative way to frame the interrelationship between practice and teaching. In her studies of *Convention and Practice* (2004), Carroll has challenged the belief that artists' practice conforms to an integrated and disciplined pattern, which can be used towards a pedagogy of fine art teaching. Instead, she believes that there are concealed frames of references, which are the artist's beliefs about art teaching, which she found to be *not* directly related to his/her own practice, but rather related to the tutor's own art education. However, Carroll did her research in Australia on teachers operating within highly structured courses.

At Chelsea, it is ideally the students' own practice that sets the parameters for the learning, (within an institutional framework of a shared curriculum in terms of modules, learning outcomes and assessment criteria). This is what the Chelsea BA Fine Art Handbook refers to as 'student focused learning'. Within this course delivery mode, I find that my teaching practice relates less to my own education and more to my art practice. It is, however, the *students' practice* that establishes the terms of engagement. But through this work on hidden frames of reference, Carroll raises very important questions with regards to *tutor predispositions* in



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general and I would say also with regards to what exactly is an artist practice when discussed in relation to teaching. Commonly today an arts practice is to perform different roles such as theorist/archivist/artist and to use a range of formats from exhibition to think-tank including the whole gamut of relational art practices as defined by Nicholas Bourriaud (2002). In addition, from Joseph Beuys to Copenhagen Free University, there are many artists who make work explicitly through the medium of education, however, in contemporary practice this tends to take place outside of art education institutions. Does a practice only include works *produced*, which in the context of contemporary practice could be an entirely immaterial and/or relational practice, or can practice be seen to incorporate the *performing* of all those activities that are related to or spring out of practice? In that case, one would expect that for this inclusive way of viewing the artist's *production*, different kinds of questions can be asked with regards to *arts practice* in relation to what we might call *teaching practice*?

So from this point we could tentatively say that the kind of passion held by a tutor towards his/her practice will relate to *a number of areas and activities, including teaching, and will be constantly evolving, changing and shifting. Thus in effect the same situation as the student finds himself/herself in.* The other thing we have to consider is that in teaching it is not only the teacher's practice (however this is defined) that comes into the encounter, but also the teacher's experience of having been a student and all the related emotional investment.

As previously asserted there is not much literature available within the area of emotion in teaching art, so I have also looked at studies relating emotion directly to creative production as well as mapping some myths relating to artists. This includes how artists' work/art is produced and how art is consumed. The second point is important as we also have emotional expectations of an encounter with an artwork. And perhaps this situation has some resemblances to the case when a tutor meets/encounters the work of a student.

As artists, our art practice informs our teaching in various more or less subtle ways. Therefore, the notion of a pedagogical stance that builds on or incorporates a tutor's particular sense of practice could encompass the notion of *reflective knowing*, whereby a particular idea of knowing is embraced but at the same time also queried.

### The passionate art student

Avril and Nunley (1992) have written on 'living an emotionally creative life'. Their book is not about the kinds of emotions experienced by artists during the creative process, but on how we can (all) be emotionally creative, which again

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links us to the idea of the potentiality contained in emotion in an educational context. Also, they too emphasise that all emotions are the product of our cultural heritage, which brings us back to the cultural expectations of the perceived emotional state of artists/art students.

To achieve our full potential, to actualise our unique and genuine selves, we must be open to discovery, exploration and challenge in the emotional as much as the in the intellectual domain.

(1992, p. 14)

Emotion can, following Avril and Nunley, be defined as a constructivist conception – thus it is a feeling that can encompass both rationalist and romantic conceptions. Their perception of a relationship between creativity and emotion can be used also to make connections between the processes of creativity and the process of learning. So where it is perhaps most useful to talk about creative emotion or passion in their terms is actually when it is most closely aligned with concepts of learning: as acquisition, refinement and transformation. I do not believe that students on fine art courses learn very differently from students in other subjects. But as they are expected to be independent and define what they set out to learn themselves, the fine art course does require that students are willing to take this responsibility for their learning, for mapping out the area to learn within and have the maturity to structure their time and work appropriately.

According to perceptions held by art students, tutors and society, art students are more passionate about their subject, than many other undergraduates. By stepping away from beliefs and myths passed down from the Romantic era, this passion could also be partly explained because many art students have already invested in their art education through undertaking a foundation course. Generally speaking, few students will be on fine art courses due to pressure from the family or similar. They will be there because they want to be artists or at least work within the creative industries. The *Destinations and Reflections Research* (1999) into the careers of British art, craft and design graduates has found that a few years after graduation only 20% of student are in employment unrelated to art and design, which is higher than for graduates in other fields. On the whole, a lack of engagement with subject is perhaps less of an issue on a fine art course than on some other courses.

### Teaching art as a reflective practice

Brockbank and McGill acknowledge the importance of emotion in their writing and state:



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We shall need those who are comfortable, and who are willing to take the risk of sometimes being uncomfortable with emotion, to handle the volatile fuel and ensure that the energy is contained for the benefit of learning.

(Brockbank & McGill, 2007, p. 53)

They argue that as emotion is one of the three aspects of what they call the learning triangle (with knowledge and action interaction), emotion in fact 'holds the key to a higher level of learning through reflective dialogue' (2007, p. 49). This means that emotion is a necessary component to achieve double loop learning where beliefs are challenged and underlying values are changed, and this is the kind of learning that fine art students will have to engage with even on an undergraduate course, as critical reflection on their work, the context of the work and on the discipline itself is expected. This relates well to my own experience, both as a student and as a teacher.

Brockbank and McGill further outline the necessary requirements for reflective teaching and learning, and the first condition mentioned is *relationship*, thus foregrounding that interaction with learners is about forging a connection. With their focus on the relationship, Brockbank and McGill build on the work of the clinical and pedagogical psychology of Carl Rogers (1983) who outlined the necessary qualities of a relationship between the learner and the teacher including:

- realness or genuineness;
- prizing acceptance and trust of the learners;
- empathic understanding – which must be communicated.

When I have felt that I have learned most intensely or (effectively) this has always been in some way emotional and it has (sometimes unconsciously) taken place as part of a reflective process, sometimes as or after a dialogue with an empathic teacher. I do not distinguish emotional learning from other types of learning, rather here highlight the role that emotion plays in most if not all learning.

### One-to-one tutorial

The one-to-one tutorial is still a defining trait of learning and teaching in fine art. Towards facilitating a reflective dialogue, I would argue that it can be invaluable. In the one-to-one, the student has enough time to start to relax, let down his/her guard, discuss being stuck, frustrated or depressed about current work and equally able to share unselfconsciously successes, progress and joy, as well as confusion and fear of failure. It is the place where tutors can have the space to be empathic in

their engagement with the student and his/her work. Again, Roger (1983) and Brockbank and McGill (2007) emphasise that this form of empathy is primary, and thus does not enter into the arena of the work of the therapist or counsellor.

### Example based on own studio teaching

One-to-one with stage two student:

Student uncommunicative and disengaging with the situation, looking away. Very little work evidenced. How do I communicate empathy through my belief in creative passion here? In a way this is not something to be switched on at the time but a fundamental approach to teaching. But faced here with a not very obviously passionate student, the tutor has to further tap into that passion for himself/herself, in order to reach out to the student, and make a connection, which will enable the student to get something from the encounter. Tutor has to believe that this student cares deeply. Tutor does and says very little, tutor waits, is friendly and makes 'small talk' in some way modelling an interest in the work of the student without questioning or pushing the student. This is as a form of 'connected knowledge' where tutor suspends judgment in an attempt to understand the student's way of making sense of their experiences (Brockbank & McGill, 2007, p. 69) Student starts to relax, looks at tutor, starts to talk about feeling very unsure about the current work, about feelings of being lost, of feelings of disengagement with process and the course. Then after an unpacking of these feelings by voicing these to an empathic listener, the student is ready to engage with the actual art work(s) and discuss this from a less emotional perspective and throughout the tutor's stance is that this work is worthwhile and important and has potential. This way the student himself/herself will do the job of the critical reflection needed to move the work forward and learn.

### Group seminar

The group seminar is the area where emotion has to become more formally framed within a critical position towards the work. This is a difficult balancing act for the students. The situation itself can be fraught; students can feel very ambivalent about being 'judged' by their peers, and by their tutors, in public. The group seminar



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should not be about passing judgement, however this is probably the emotional response to the situation that many students feel. Some students relish the chance of multiple feedback positions and the possibility of lively debate with their work in centre. These students are the minority but in my experience there will for most be an element of excitement mixed in with the dread at the seminar situation.

In some respects it is not the student whose work is being discussed who will learn the most from the encounter; it is often more likely the other students taking part. They will also be apprehensive, as there is an expectation of being able to discuss work critically and offer constructive criticism intelligently, and thus all students who participate also feel that they may be judged in some way, particularly, perhaps, by the tutors(s) present.

However, in learning terms in relation to reflective practice, the group crit allows for dialogues, which can be reflective in the sense that as learning always takes place within a social context – the learners are also a social construct. Here there can be dialogues as forms of social engagement. This is an arena where the idea of practice in all its dimensions can be examined and explored and where the result of (often private) creative passion can be unpacked and reflected on as a group. This is where creative passion can be shared and redefined in a useful way between peers, witnessed by the tutor.

### Conclusion

Passion towards art as a subject, activity and event will be part of the stance of most tutors in fine art. For tutors to examine this stance, to make it more specific, overt and transparent, can perhaps provide a productive starting point for empathy that can make reflective dialogues between tutor and student or between students facilitated by tutors more effective in terms of learning for the student.

As a tutor, the passion I have for art enables me to empathise with a student in a teaching and learning context. This helps me when I am faced with a student whose work I do not immediately understand or when I am faced with students whose work I find very problematic and/or difficult to relate to. Students often expect teachers to be able to read and decode their projects – perhaps they want us to do this job for them. I think we can get the student to do this work of analysing, describing and critically evaluating his/her practice through reflective dialogue, between tutor and student, in an empathic context. This can then form part of a discursive model that can be used between students in group crits, as well as towards informal studio discussions.

### Between fine art and teaching: reflecting creative passion

A truly reflective dialogue cannot happen without empathy, and empathy in this case is based on my passion for the subject that we are both engaged with. In the one-to-one tutorial, my practice and my other predispositions, like my own art education, do influence my engagement with the students' work, but as the one-to-one tutorial affords the time and space, this can become transparent and also be offered up and used as part of the reflective dialogue. An empathic approach in the one-to-one should include a sharing and showing of passion towards creative practice and art. By communicating passion, not only verbally but equally through body language, speech pattern and intonation, we can set up a platform for passionate belief in the importance of art in life.

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**Appendix D:** Katrine Hjelde and Michaela Ross, 'Constructing a Reflective Site within Art Education', in *Enhancing Curricula: using research and enquiry to inform student learning in the disciplines*, Houghton, Nicholas, (ed.), CLTAD, 2008.



## Constructing a reflective site within art education

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### Introduction

This paper explores the analytic potential of artists'/educators' dual practice in terms of *reflection* and *interpretation*. We would argue that for artists and educators in art, the act of interpretation is central to making but crucially also to art's reception, and is therefore subject-specific to fine art. Perhaps the notion of *interpretation* is particularly pertinent to the reception of art: the opening up of a discursive arena, a reflective site for the artwork to operate within and through. With arts practices becoming increasingly immaterial – as in so-called 'relational arts practice' (Bourriaud, 2002), the moment of reception has become crucial, and we would argue that this has also brought a new context to the materially based production of discrete art objects. The dual role of the artist and educator can provide different points of departure from which to construct this reflective site.

These positions are, however, not necessarily always in binary opposition. Education itself, as we will discuss, can be a form of art. We posit a dual position in order to consider the artist's practice as constituting a particular kind of discursive site which often overlaps

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with the educational site, but which also relates to a number of parallel areas of art and cultural production.

As artist educators our position is made yet more complex as we can situate what we do in both the art practice site and the institutional site of the art school and museum. Therefore, we will juxtapose the art college and the museum, reflexively relating to our respective backgrounds as educators.

This paper will explore models for explicit and transparent relationships between teaching practice and art practices, not as a model of 'good practice' to be emulated, nor in the Beuysian sense as an event to take part in, but rather as a reflection on modes of thinking, on research as process and on material approaches. We will both re-engage with pedagogical models concerning reflective teaching and explore a *parallel* arena within philosophy.

With the increase of parallel provision in art schools alongside studio practice (from theory modules to professional development), this paper will propose that, as well as exploring current applications of theory around reflective practice in pedagogy, it is also productive to examine reflection and the philosophically related term 'interpretation' within parallel subject-specific frames. We argue that, in art and design, meaning making is central and obtained through deliberate shifts and disruptions of interpretative contexts. Exploring philosophical theories of interpretation can be useful in understanding the particular nature of reflection in our field. This may suggest a productive intersection of the discursive site of the tutor's practice with the institutional site of the university/museum, and facilitate the construction of a reflective site by students and tutors together in the teaching/learning encounter.

### Background

Today, within both art and education, what we may call the 'Beuysian model' (referring to the art/teaching practice of Joseph Beuys), has largely been left behind, as it reinforced the authority of the artist/teacher despite its democratising ideals (Podesva, 2007). The historical gesture of attempting to eliminate the separation



between art and life was, however, instrumental in the development of contemporary relational art practices and institutional critique, both of which have provoked a critical re-engagement with pedagogy and 'the academy' as vehicles through which to explore a range of issues relating to cultural knowledge production, here seen as being situated within the collective and collaborative through the discursive, if not the actual, space of the institution.

Beuys appropriated educational forms for his artistic production, presenting lectures as performances, making blackboard drawings/paintings as an 'outcome'. This was part of Beuys' project of living sculpture – where everyone can be an artist through participation in cultural and political life. However, there is a major contradiction at the heart of this work as – despite seeking education and equality for all – his endeavours entirely hinged on his charismatic persona as an artist and teacher.

Beuys has influenced several recent developments of practice, for example relational art, where the viewers/participants entirely co-produce the meaning of the work, making the relationship between the artist and the audience more equal. Thus there is no didactic element as such. Following Kwon (2004), artists who appropriate education as a medium for art-making in the form of schools, knowledge exchange, reading groups, lectures, laboratories, etc. can be seen as treating site-specificity in its broadest, most discursive, sense.

At present, there is a great deal of interest in the 'academy' as a particular site of cultural knowledge production. This, however, is taking place largely outside of the physical institution of the art college.

Recent exhibitions: A.C.A.D.E.M.Y, Biennales: Documenta 12, and Conferences: Summit Kein 07 have all directly engaged with these ideas. Artists, such as Copenhagen Free University and curators, for example Anton Vidokle, are using education as the vehicle for their practice. Copenhagen Free University are engaged with the academy as an institution, are located discursively within the site of the

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academy, but not physically within it: Copenhagen Free University is run from the founders' flat.

Copenhagen Free University is one voice in a mumble of voices. We are not two or three individuals, we are an institution drifting through various social relations, in the process of being produced and producing. We are the people in the house. This position establishes an ever-changing formation characterised by many contexts, platforms, voices, actions, but also by inactivity, refusal, evacuation, withdrawal, exodus.

(Heise & Jacobsen, 2001)

Art practice today is in part unrecognisable from the kinds of practices that the art school traditionally has been built on and for. Thus there is an ever-increasing range of working practices taking place within the art schools simultaneously. So where does this leave the question regarding a critical practice/teaching interrelationship? In the case of the 'actual' art academy, i.e. the art college, where does this art world appropriation of art education leave critical thinking around practice and teaching?

The actual activity that can take place in a school – experimentation, scholarship, research, discussion, criticism, collaboration, friendship – is a continuous process of redefining and seeking out the potential in practice and theory at a given point in time. An art school is not concerned solely with the process of learning, but can be and often is a highly active site of cultural production

(Vidokle, 2006)

### Foreground

How does reflection currently occur as part of teaching and learning in the art school and in the museum? Starting with the art college, we can see the notion of reflective teaching has entered the vocabulary of the curriculum. Within the curriculum structure, fine art courses often have both explicit models for reflective engagement, ranging from learning journals (assessed/non-assessed) to self-reflective tutorial forms, to less explicit models where there is an



expectation of forms of reflection articulated through a contextualisation of practice.

The model for these forms of reflective engagement seems to be based on the reflective practitioner model as articulated by Schön (1991). This acknowledges the possibility of forms of reflection happening through practice (reflection-in-action) as perhaps a defining aspect of material-based arts practice, but which also requires some form of reflection after the event (reflection-on-action). In any case, these models are generally based on the idea of a singular student engaging with his/her own practice and reflecting on his/her learning process. These models of reflection are thus generally focused on learning which can be assessed, and which can thus be easily instrumentalised by the institution. Group crits and seminars, however, afford engagement with reflection in a different way. Crits/seminars often have a defined model for engagement (an institutionally defined structure) but generally the models for reflective engagement within these systems are not articulated and thus there is no real transparency and no real discussion of the multi-layered possibilities afforded by the crit/seminar as an activity. Instead it is a session based around presentations of students' work (student-centred teaching model), but how the discursive site of the tutor's practice enters into this equation, and how engagement is constituted by the institutional site, is often not raised. Thus the tutor's practice can take on an aura of authority and unwittingly operate as a model. In terms of reflection, this becomes in some ways a lost opportunity for both group reflection, in terms of reflective learning, and for forms of reflective interpretation.

Similar processes are at work within the institution of the museum. In 2004, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) created the Generic Learning Outcomes framework for evaluating learning in the museum/gallery. This model was intended to create common ground across an apparently diverse range of practices within different museums and galleries. However, different galleries and museums espouse different approaches to interpretation, some explicit, some less so. At Tate, for example, interpretation approaches

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are outlined in the *Art Gallery Handbook* (Tate, 2006) and although it could be argued that this enables participants to share a stated framework of interpretation (transparency), the 'system' risks being taken as a universal model, or as a superior model to others.

On a non-specialised student-centred fine art course, the cognitive meeting point between a student and teacher cannot automatically or critically be inferred through the use of a specific media and the history and traditions of this media. Instead, this cognitive meeting point will operate within a predominately discursive domain. The same can be said for teaching within the museum. Thus an intersection between the student and the teacher has to be explicitly located and a site for meaningful exchange and reflection constructed: a discursive site operates through the institutional site but is not bound by it.

How can we construct an intersection of the discursive site (Kwon, 2004) of the tutor's practice with the institutional site of the university/museum, and can this move facilitate the construction of a reflective site by students and tutors *together* in the teaching/learning encounter? Is *reflective* the key word for this endeavour – and, if so, how does it relate to reflection as a catchword in higher education (Cowan, 2006; Brookbank & McGill, 2007)? We will begin with Dewey (1933) and look at reflection within his writing and at the 'benchmark' concept of reflection as found in Schön.

According to Moon (2005), Dewey's notion of reflection is a chain of linked ideas that aims at a conclusion and is thus more than a stream of consciousness. The outcome of reflective thinking is important, but more crucial for him is the initiation of a state of doubt, uncertainty or difficulty. Dewey does not present reflection as an interactive or dialogical process. His work was grounded in the idea that 'the individual student-teacher learns to reflect on a particular experience individually' (Cinnamond & Zimpher, 1990). Thus reflection in this context is a solitary and individual process and so it remains today in a great many of the reflective activities designed within the art/art education institutions.



### Parallel ground

Moving the discussion into what we here refer to as a parallel ground of philosophy, we will engage with concepts found in Dewey, but take a different perspective, to help us examine the notion of dual practice and its critical potential. Habermas was highly influenced by Dewey and built on his definition of reflection (Habermas, 1971). Equally important to our understanding of Habermas is his critique of certain philosophers associated with hermeneutics. A key feature of this critique is the debate between Habermas and Gadamer. In Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960), meaning making is collaborative, located within a specific historical tradition through language. Here he builds on the ideas of Heidegger (1927), who first stated, in *Being and Time*, that understanding is a mode of being. Heidegger also proposed the concept of the 'hermeneutic circle', a diagrammatic description of the process by which questioning in discussion leads us to challenge the foundations of our own beliefs. Gadamer sees prejudices as inevitable and constructive. Through dialogue, we 'risk' our prejudices by exposing them to the opinion of the other. However, Habermas critiques Gadamer's idea of consensus in discussion, which he asserts may disguise ideological distortion. Habermas advocates another form of consensus achieved through an idea of rationality (1987), but this too has been critiqued by others (Foucault) who argue against his reclamation of reason and his advocacy for institutions that that might embody it. Here, the potential problem of artificial consensus is raised, which is particularly pertinent to the institutional site.

As in the construction of meaning, the participant and the artist-as-educator have to learn to cope with uncertainty and potentially conflict, and with the idea that an endpoint can never be reached. We would argue that this is a particular characteristic of both art practice and hermeneutics – this sense of reworking in the present, of living with uncertainties, of responsiveness to changing factors of influence.

This deliberate return to hermeneutic philosophies here comes out of a desire to understand the complexities of interpretive processes

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better, particularly within institutional contexts (the art school and the art museum). Through the challenges of these texts, and through the re-enactment of the various debates within the tradition, we argue that the artist/tutor can resist the instrumentalisation of the processes in which we engage (and ask our students to engage). A close reading of the philosophical sources is an argument for flexibility, required by 'hermeneutic undecideability', where the focus is on an ongoing process rather than the creation of models that result in the closure of the interpretive space.

We are interested in the debate between Habermas and Foucault in relation to an idea of civic society (Flyvbjerg, 1998). This discussion is not directly concerned with pedagogy, art or education – but important points are raised in discussions such as these, which can be used to explore the idea of reflection in teaching within fine art in the institution of the art school as well as the museum.

For Habermas, reflection is a tool used in the development of particular forms of knowledge. He is interested in knowledge constitutive interests – the nature of knowledge that man has selected to adopt or the nature of knowledge humans have been motivated to generate. This, he claims, can have emancipatory interests for certain social groups via critical or evaluative modes of thought and enquiry, so as serve to better understand the self, the human condition or self in the human condition. As tutors promoting reflection, believing it to do 'good' in this Habermasian sense, it is perhaps useful to explore how on one level we feel that open discussion/reflection is an inherent 'good' (Habermas), but at the same time, following Foucault, we should be aware of the many ways that this kind of discussion/reflection can be undermined from the outset by tacit power relationships.

### Conclusion

'Hermeneutic undecidability' is the ability of a cultural representation to generate not just ambiguity but a conflict of interpretations (Biro, 1998).



With this concept we will attempt a conclusion. Hermeneutic undecidability, we argue, is an inherent quality activated at the meeting point between the artworks and its audience. This notion can perhaps provide a model for reflection and interpretation, which is not aiming for consensus, where learning cannot be measured and therefore be easily instrumentalised towards assessment. Power structures can be seen and discussed and can be framed within the context of obtaining a degree within the higher education system or feeling 'at home' within the public institution of the museum. Within some systems created both within the art school and the art museum, there can be an emphasis on progression in reflection, with a clear delineation of the interpretive stages. Whilst as artists our focus might be on the 'here and now' of the interpretive process, where meaning making circles back on itself and is constantly shifting, institutional discourses can emphasise the value of one mode of interpretation over another. A typical example might be the prioritising of the art-historical context within the art museum, often reinforced by the authority of the curator.

Whilst not wanting to prioritise one particular interpretive approach over another, given the institutional setting of art education in the school and the museum, the history of critical interpretation is a storehouse of insights. How do we prevent discussion becoming formulaic? For Michel Foucault (1926–1984), 'Power is always present' and communication may always be distorted by power relations. Habermas's 'communicative rationality' risks becoming a norm, a technique and a principle to be enforced. Foucault prefers to challenge statements of universality, focusing instead on the particularities of context and on key questions concerning power relations: who stands to benefit from this discourse? Who speaks and who is silent? Foucault's thinking allows us to think more broadly about who is invited to speak in the discursive space of the school/gallery and who is not. More specifically, it allows us to question whether the position of the artist as facilitator of the discussion can ever be neutral and to reflect on the institution as a space where power struggles are

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unavoidable and ongoing, particularly with regards to which discourse dominates at any particular time.

Interpretations can be rehearsed, copied, modelled on the expectations we have of each other and limited by institutional frameworks. The ongoing debates within the field of hermeneutics might allow us to establish similar debates within ourselves, and between ourselves and our students. It may help us to imagine what the discursive site might be in both the art school and the museum. It's not complexity for its own sake – but critical hermeneutics, where we ask what ideologies might be at play in the discussions we instigate and maintain.

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**Appendix E:** Rebecca Fortnum and Katrine Hjelde, 'Fine Art's educational turn', in Clews, David, (ed.), *Dialogues in Art And Design: Promoting and Sharing Excellence*, ADM-HEA/GLAD, 2009.



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#### 1.4 Teachers and Practitioners

##### 1.4.2 Fine Art's 'Educational Turn'




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#### Abstract

A current challenge for teaching fine art is to keep a productive and critical dynamic between the subject and the academy. The 'educational turn' is a recently coined phrase that describes a movement within the contemporary art practice. This 'turn' considers education *as a form of art in itself* and has yet to be explored explicitly within pedagogic theory. It has, however, begun to change how it is possible for artist-teachers to conceive of, and discuss, the practice-teaching interrelationship. This paper aims to contribute to this discussion and draws on research made available through the CLIP-CETL's research project 'The Teaching Landscapes in the Creative Arts'. It explores notions of audience, participation and the teaching studio.

#### Introduction

One of the challenges for teaching undergraduate, postgraduate and, now, research fine art students is to keep a productive and critical dynamic between the subject and the academy. This dynamic is currently problematised by, on the one hand, radical shifts in recent fine art practice in its relation to institutions and audience, and on the other, the standardisation of HE provision in accordance with the EU Bologna process.

Art magazines such as *Frieze* (2006) and *Artecontexto* (2007) have devoted recent issues to rethinking the idea of the 'art school' and in October 2008 *Art Monthly* published a special issue on art education, in particular focusing on a perceived lack of connection between the art school curriculum and the practices of contemporary artists in the UK. This paper aims to contribute to this discussion and draws on research made available through the Fine

Art Report of CLIP-CETL's project 'The Teaching Landscapes in the Creative Arts' (Fortnum and Houghton, 2007). (This research project was carried out at University of Arts London (UAL) by teaching staff who interviewed their colleagues on their attitudes towards teaching and we believe that the perspective of artist-educators working within HEIs is key to the debate.) In this research all the artist-teachers interviewed referred to themselves as 'practitioners'. This in itself posits a conundrum in relation to this possible schism between academic subject and contemporary practice; how do these artist-educators straddle both the art world and academy? What is interesting is that, whilst noting a range of possible approaches to the *teaching* of their subject, as well as the expanding field of their discipline, the report suggested that interviewees felt a consensus towards the teaching of their discipline, indeed a 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998). As one interviewee put it, 'within fine art ... I don't think there is really significant differences [between tutors' approaches to teaching]' (Fortnum and Houghton, 2007: 7). This may well be in some part due to the current requirement for teacher training for all newly appointed and existing staff practitioners as well as the discussions around research interests that the recent research assessment exercise (RAE) has brought about. As UAL lecturer Maria Walsh (2008), writing in *Art Monthly* noted,

*...a stronger sense of belonging to an educational community is currently developing among lecturers involved in research and teaching.*

To make sense of the demands and counter demands on the role of teaching fine art within the academy we need to briefly look at the ways the subject has developed. Recent debates in the art world have explored the notion of what has been called the 'educational turn' both in curating and art practice. For instance: Summit Kein (2007) ([www.summit.kein.org](http://www.summit.kein.org)); Theory and Practice, Art Education Today at Freize Art Fair (2008) ([www.friezeartfair.com/podcasts/details/theory\\_practice\\_art\\_education\\_today/](http://www.friezeartfair.com/podcasts/details/theory_practice_art_education_today/)); the Salon Discussion: You Talkin' to me? Why art is turning to education at London's ICA (2008)



([www.ica.org.uk/files/audio/noughttosixty/ica-nts-salon-20080714-education.mp3](http://www.ica.org.uk/files/audio/noughttosixty/ica-nts-salon-20080714-education.mp3)); and exhibitions like A.C.A.D.E.M.Y (2006), the failed Manifesta 6 (2006) ([www.manifesta.org/manifesta6/index.htm](http://www.manifesta.org/manifesta6/index.htm)), Unitednationsplaza (2006) (now continued in New York as 'Night School', Documenta 12 (2007), and Night School (2008) ([www.newmuseum.org/event\\_series/night\\_school](http://www.newmuseum.org/event_series/night_school)). Curators like Anton Vidokle and artists such as Copenhagen Free University (2001-2007) began a deliberate investigation of pedagogy as practice. As Irit Rogoff (2008) has pointed out, what constitutes this 'turning' is not yet fully explored, but is based on a notion of positioning education 'as a space of experiment and exploration'. Crucially she asks, 'How might we extract these vital principles and apply them to the rest of our lives?' (2008: 2).

Of course, this is not the first time that artists have developed an educational aspect to their practice, as the familiar examples of Joseph Beuys or the Bauhaus demonstrate. But what is of current interest is that this 'educational turn' considers *education as a form of art in itself* and not, primarily, as a subject of facilitation (Podesva, 2007). Indeed, it could be argued that 'relational aesthetics' provides alternative models to what might be termed the Beuysian model. In this new relational paradigm democratically based forms of engagement, like Rainer Ganahl's reading groups, replace the previous example where the artist remained the fulcrum for the (educational) experience. What is at stake for art schools in the UK is that this 'turning' is taking place predominantly outside of the art educational institutions, happening instead in museums, galleries, through artist-led initiatives and online. (Interestingly, as these debates have been unfolding, the establishment of the CLIP-CETL at UAL has represented a significant investment into teaching and learning, providing more opportunities to reflect and debate on pedagogical approaches within the academy, but these take time to evolve.) As Dieter Lesage (2009: 1) has commented, 'very often, the academic turn seems to be a way to turn away from the academy.'

For artist-educators, this 'educational turn', however, has begun to change how it is possible to conceive of, and discuss, the practice-teaching interrelationship. The function of the tutor's ongoing

practice within teaching-learning encounters can now be seen to have a much broader application than the traditional models of teaching by example (beaux-arts or atelier tradition) or the notion of apprenticeship allows. Quite how this shift towards pedagogy as an art practice in itself might play out within the academies remains to be seen. It is perhaps difficult to imagine fully such an interface between an essentially unpredictable creative practice and the prevailing cultures of accounting and accountability within our current institutional structures. However, there is little doubt that the impact of the changing subject will further alter attitudes and conceptions of teaching and teachers within art school. But a discussion about how this emerging 'community' of practitioners could or should productively relate to, use or critically resist the 'educational turn' in the art world is so far absent from this debate.

We would now like to turn our attention to aspects of the fine art curriculum in order to briefly map out the impact of these recent shifts in fine art thinking and practice upon the work of the artist-teacher. We will look at two areas: the emphasis on the notion of audience within fine art teaching; and attitudes towards the learning environment, specifically the teaching studio.

#### From art making to audience

The 'Landscapes' fine art report notes that the Fine Art Practitioners (FAPs) see art school teaching as 'ideas-led' (as opposed to being directed by technical instruction) with learning happening 'through making'. They also believe they should teach the 'wider context' of art-making; 'professional practice, writing proposals, exhibiting...' (Fortnum and Houghton, 2007). The universal acceptance of this expanded role for the artist (cultural producer, project initiator, collaborator, publicist, etc.) is a recent development that is pragmatic and, at times, ideological. On a practical level tutors have very often engaged in artist-led initiatives themselves, particularly establishing forums for the display and critical debate of their work, and this naturally has become a priority within their teaching. One FAP discussed the importance of seeing 'how [the student's work] exists in the world' (Fortnum and Houghton, 2007: 5). Another allowed his

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*The universal acceptance of this expanded role for the artist (cultural producer, project initiator, collaborator, publicist, etc.) is a recent development that is pragmatic and, at times, ideological.*

students to use an off-site gallery space he had established to help confront students with ‘the decisions they were making ... about how to interact with the viewer’ (p.5).

This emphasis on the work’s relation with audience permeates the curriculum at every level. As Singerman (2007) points out, there is no longer any one thing that all fine art students need to learn; rather, as one interviewee put it, ‘I think that fine art education has developed to focus a lot more around the individual rather than a laid out “text book” of subjects that one must get under one’s belt’ (Fortnum and Houghton, 2007: 10).

In this context of student-led learning, the continued interest in audience reaction, engagement and interpretation brings coherency to a disparate and individualised curriculum, allowing for group learning activities (important when teaching large numbers), for example, studio and the increasingly popular off-site exhibition critiques. Tutors often see their role in these events as articulating diverse audience perspectives and facilitating discussion, thus focusing increasingly on models of interpretation (Hjelde and Ross, 2008). As one tutor noted,

*I think it is interesting for the students to see that the same sort of discussion that they’re having between each other can take place ... between staff.* (Fortnum and Houghton, 2007: 15)

In one sense the teaching-learning encounters have become largely immaterial and discursive. For example, in the UK since the Coldstream era it is unusual for technical instruction or a tutor-led class making activity to take place in the contemporary academy studio. Indeed we might speculate that the educational turn in art may be a particular outcome of exposure to this more discursive educational mode.

This approach is also supported by other, more ideological, factors that emerge from a generation of tutors who encountered in their own art school education in the 70s and 80s a radical re-evaluation of aesthetics’ relation to power. Teachers’ practice is linked to, and informed by, their art practice, but also inseparable from their own educational and other experiences as artists (Carroll, 2004). Tutors

who, as students, were informed and inspired by the arguments of the ‘new art history’ and the emergent discipline of ‘cultural theory’ are more likely to question the traditional pedagogic relations and favour notions of ‘socially constructed learning’ (Brockbank and McGill, 2007). Their belief in art’s social function can be seen played out in contemporary art’s ‘socially engaged practice’ and emphasis on audience engagement.

### The teaching studio

In his 1971 essay ‘The Function of the Studio’, Daniel Buren (1979) articulated a growing scepticism surrounding the studio’s place within art practice that is having repercussions today, both within and outside the academy. His dismissal of the studio as ‘private space’ where artworks are unable to coherently address what they will ‘become’ when viewed is interesting to consider in relation to the art school studio. The art school studio has never been private in the way Buren describes, and although the Chapman Brothers describe the art school studios of their own education as ‘neurotic little white units’ (Furlong *et al.*, 2000: 65), recent studio conventions have led to a greater amount of open, shared and flexible space. Indeed the FAPs of the ‘Landscapes’ report talk about the ‘curation’ of undergraduate studios, that is a deliberate and thoughtful placing of student practices in a physical relationship. For example, one tutor suggests that student studio groups are made to ‘bounce off different practices rather than be in groups which would tend to have ... a certain agenda or ... way of making’ (Fortnum and Houghton, 2007: 4). What is interesting about this is the studio is being used with a pedagogic function. Rather than bolstering the authority of the professor like the ‘atelier’ system, it is being used here to create an environment that will challenge the student.

What emerges from this scenario is a belief in the teaching studio not as place of mysterious creation but rather as a *technology* and as a *social* site of personal and creative *potential*. (We are indebted to John Seth’s contribution to a Pedagogical Research Group event at UAL for this insight.) As a technology, like a paintbrush or a video camera, it strategically facilitates the making of particular work

*What is at stake for art schools in the UK is that this 'turning' is taking place predominantly outside of the art educational institutions, happening instead in museums, galleries, through artist-led initiatives and online.*

and its use is subject to critical judgment. With reference to Miwon Kwon's (2004) categories of site-specific art practice, the studio can also be understood within a system of site-specific art practice that might include working with the physical architecture or within the context of the educational institution as well as discursively through the more obvious formal and informal formats of interpretation and critical engagement the curriculum provides. Parallel to these intellectual challenges and the material changes in art practices, increased numbers of students has meant that studio provision in art schools has diminished per student in recent years. Current students thus find themselves often engaging simultaneously with different bodies of work: the 'official' work of the art school studio as well as works made in domestic or other spaces. The studio thus continues to be a contested space, both critically and physically.

However, the 'Landscapes' report makes it clear that the studio, within the art school, is still valued by those that teach within it. This is precisely because, as Buren (1979) points out, it is a space that is differentiated from the work's final destination. All it contains has the potential to change and is thus positioned 'in process', staving off critical closure and allowing for unforeseen outcomes and possible futures. The student-artist is free to move between new and old work, accrue research materials and experiments, all of which are simultaneously visible in the studio; as Brian O'Doherty puts it, 'studio time is a mobile cluster of tenses' (2008: 18). This is of course crucial for the student-artist for whom the expectation is that the degree is a three years gestation or a continual process from which they will emerge as a 'professional' artist. Additionally, teaching in the same site as production provides the tutor with evidence of a different narrative of making to the written or verbal 'account' often supplied by the student-artist within the curriculum (during tutorials or in written self-evaluations, for example). It can aid in the difficulties surrounding exchanges of tacit knowledge but it can also allow an insight into attitudes towards processes, which are becoming increasingly important. As Estelle Barrett says,

*Within the context of research, 'output' refers not only to*

*the products of creative arts practices that may be judged by conventional criteria of artistic merit, but also to the experimental and material processes through which such products are externalised. (2004)*

The studio facilitates a particular and subject-specific form of reflection for both the individual and the group. As a recent report by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) into the careers of fine art graduates concluded, 'Unstructured time in a studio is central to the UK art school model, and learning is a process of discovery, aided, but not directed, by experts' (Oakley *et al.*, 2008: 1).

The importance of an education that provides a space for potential, as well as a sense that the educator's role is as a facilitator rather than gatekeeper of knowledge, has been fundamental to fine art education since the 1960s and remains so.

#### **Fine art practice as a model for teaching and learning**

John Cowan and others have held up the artist as the ultimate reflective practitioner (Hethrington, 1994). However, it is important to make clear that the kinds of reflective practices undertaken by artists are not always the same as the more generic models found in teaching and learning theory, and this is crucial when introducing structures for reflection within the art school curriculum. For instance, an artist's reflection may not be words-based and often takes place through making. It can thus be seen to become embedded into the practice itself rather than as a parallel activity. As our discussion of the discipline demonstrates, fine art is an expanding and evolving field and any educational intervention for reflection needs to be equally flexible and permeable. The sense that there is a 'right way' to reflect must be challenged and we should resist its easy 'instrumentalisation' by the institution. And, as Angela Devas (2004) has pointed out, building on Foucauldian theory, reflective practice can take the form of confession, with the power residing with the 'listening' institution, rather than the reflective student or practitioner. Equally, it is important to remember that non-reflection

- that is play, chance, ignorance, ‘not knowing’ and tacit knowledge
- also has an important place within an artist’s process.

### Conclusion

To conclude, we believe that the dynamic of fine art pedagogy and practice is underexplored within the academy and is currently only being held up for scrutiny as it leaves the art school for parallel institutions like museums and galleries. Further we would suggest that the kinds of teaching that goes on in a contemporary art school could operate potentially both as a model for engaged and active teaching and learning and, as the NESTA report (Oakley *et al.*, 2008) suggests, future paradigms of work practices. What is needed is urgent further discussion by artist-teachers as well as real institutional engagement, to address not only how we might talk about and theorise what it is we do but also enable much wider reflection about knowledge production within contemporary society.

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